

# Open Research Online

---

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

## Re-constructing success: a perspective from small firms' owner-managers

### Thesis

#### How to cite:

Morel d'Arleux, Corinne (2000). Re-constructing success: a perspective from small firms' owner-managers. PhD thesis The Open University.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2000 The Author



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:  
<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000e2d5>

---

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

---

[oro.open.ac.uk](http://oro.open.ac.uk)



Corinne MOREL d'ARLEUX

Diploma of Rennes International Business School, Rennes, France, 1994.

Postgraduate Diploma in Finance and Management, University College of North Wales, Bangor,  
United Kingdom, 1993.

**RE-CONSTRUCTING SUCCESS :**  
**A PERSPECTIVE FROM SMALL FIRMS' OWNER-MANAGERS**

Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy

February 2000

The Open University, United Kingdom

Sponsoring Establishment : Groupe ESC Rennes, France

Under the supervision of

Dr Bertrand Duchéneaut, Groupe SICO-FIGA, France.

Dr Colin Gray, Open University Business School, United Kingdom.

Former supervisor : Dr Alan Hankinson, University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom.

Examination Committee

Dr Serge Oréal, Internal Examiner, ESC Rennes, France.

Dr Peter Lunt, External Examiner, University College London, United Kingdom.



« À l'individu, dans la mesure où il recherche son bonheur, il ne faut donner aucun précepte sur le chemin qui mène au bonheur : car le bonheur individuel jaillit selon ses lois propres, inconnues de tous, il ne peut être qu'entravé et arrêté par des préceptes qui viennent du dehors. »

Friedrich NIETZSCHE



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present research focuses on success as a subjective, individual-based notion. While the initial aim was not to conduct an introspective analysis, writing this thesis has undoubtedly helped me reflect upon my personal aspirations and set my own conception of success. The doctoral process is a long and demanding path. The present dissertation is the result of four years of hard work, punctuated with periods of enthusiasm, isolation and discouragement. The consequent feeling of achievement is though a major source of satisfaction that pays me back for all the efforts made. This journey would not have been possible without the encouraging presence of supporting characters. I would like to thank them here.

I would first like to give a very special thank to my Director of Studies, Dr Duchéneaut, who has initiated in me the interest in the small firms topic with his overwhelming enthusiasm. He has since then been always on my side with supporting trust and contagious optimism. I warmly thank him for all he has done to me. I also thank the examination committee Dr Peter Lunt and Dr Serge Oréal for their interest in my work. My supervisors Dr Colin Gray and before him Dr Alan Hankinson have accompanied my progress with their helpful comments and suggestions. They have introduced me to the academic world and stimulated me to become an independent and capable researcher. I hope this dissertation will pay them back for their supervising efforts.

The academic community has been a source of helpful support along the whole process. My participation to international conferences, and the friendly way I was welcomed by my colleagues, have compensated the feeling of isolation sometimes encountered in my lonely home office. I would thus like to thank all the researchers who have contributed with their advice and encouraging positions to the completion of this thesis. I cannot name them all, but they sure know who they are. I am especially grateful to the RENT Conference Committee, who have recognised my work with the Best Paper Award distinction at a time when I needed a push. The trustful and friendly invitations of my Swedish colleagues Bengt Johannisson and Per Davidsson have also been an important source of encouragement and learning. Thanks to the SIRE and JIBS teams, as well as to Frédéric Delmar for their friendly and long-lasting support.



This thesis would not have existed without the financial support received from the ESC Rennes and the support of my Rennes colleagues. I would like to give a special mention for the administrative and friendly support of Maryvonne Balin, for she has always been a considerable source of help.

The small firms owner-managers who have participated in the study, dedicating precious time to interviews and questionnaires have all my gratitude. The interest they have expressed in my research has been a source of motivation and support, and I hope the present dissertation will fulfil their expectations and prove they were right.

Last but not least, I would like to warmly thank my family and friends without whose presence I would not have experienced the doctoral process in the same way. My father, who has trusted me in my orientations and has been a precious support. My mother, whose wise presence has helped me to keep my feet on the ground and order priorities. My husband, who has always trusted and supported me in an unfailing manner, and shared with me the best and the worse of writing this dissertation. My beloved friends, whose presence has given me the strength and motivation to be worthy their esteem.

Paris, September 8, 1999.

Corinne Morel d'Arleux.



## ABSTRACT

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present dissertation is composed of two main parts. The first step lies in a conceptualisation research effort, which aims at re-constructing success and providing a new understanding of success as a subjective, individual-based concept encompassing three dimensions : professional, familial and personal success. Success is defined as : *an ideal state of global satisfaction that may relate to family, personal or work fulfilment feelings, according to individual preferences.*

The second part is an empirical study which is designed to illustrate this conceptual framework and contribute to extend our knowledge on small firms owner-managers' visions of success. An evaluation method, based on the Index for Global Success (IGS), is elaborated for that purpose. Three analyses are developed : the first one describes the respondents' global characteristics and visions of success, the second study explores males' and females' visions of success, and the last one applies the IGS method to compare high- and low success perceivers, test the link between IGS, business performance and individual satisfaction, and thus test the IGS method relevance.

The findings prove that success needs to be studied at the individual's level as a subjective construct and that the use of a composite index to evaluate success enables the gathering of overlapping dimensions composing success. The importance of personal and familial dimensions, beyond professional success, receives empirical support. Females appear to have different visions of success than males, placing higher concern on the personal dimension. Finally, the Index for Global Success enables the testing of subsamples which differ in their levels of satisfaction and firm's performance. Statistical analyses establish that 'success' (evaluated through the Index for Global Success), business performance and individual satisfaction are positively correlated.

It is concluded that the IGS method is a relevant tool to evaluate success, and that success is a complex rather than simple unidimensional construct.

### 2.1 PERSONALITY RESEARCH AND PERSONALITY

#### 2.1.1 EMPLOYMENT, PERSONALITY AND PERSONALITY

##### 2.1.1.1 Introduction



## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	v
LIST OF THE FIGURES .....	xii

<b>1. INTRODUCTORY SECTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. GENERAL CONTEXT : ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND NEW TRENDS .....	2
1.1.1. New trends in performance measurement and wording .....	2
1.1.2. Information technologies, ‘individuation’ and the small firm .....	4
1.1.3. Entrepreneurs and founders as modern heroes ? .....	4
1.1.4. Beyond the economic rationale .....	5
1.1.5. Towards a better balance in life .....	6
1.1.6. Individuals’ new expectations and vision of success .....	8
1.1.7. Implications for the present research .....	9
1.2. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH.....	10
1.2.1. History of the research topic.....	11
1.2.2. Summary of the dissertation sections’ sequence .....	12
1.2.3. Aims and expected contributions.....	13
1.2.4. Methodological framework .....	14
1.2.5. Findings and main points of relevance .....	18
1.3. ORGANISATION OF THE DISSERTATION.....	22
<b>2. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....</b>	<b>24</b>
2.1. PERSONALITY RESEARCH AND PERFORMANCE.....	25
2.1.1. Entrepreneurs versus non-entrepreneurs : personality characteristics and typologies .....	26



2.1.2.	Predictive models of performance.....	27
2.1.3.	Appropriateness of the terms : entrepreneurial success and business performance .....	31
2.2.	LIMITS OF TRADITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE.....	33
2.2.1.	Lack of coherence .....	33
2.2.2.	Inadequacy with the particularities of success-related issues in small firms.....	34
2.2.3.	Incompleteness : the non economic and subjective dimensions of success .....	37
2.3.	BEYOND THE ECONOMIC RATIONALE .....	41
2.3.1.	Empirical support to the importance of non-economic concerns.....	41
2.3.2.	Success as a multidimensional concept .....	44
2.4.	SUCCESS AS A SUBJECTIVE NOTION .....	46
2.4.1.	A matter of perceptions.....	46
2.4.2.	A context dependent notion.....	48
2.5.	SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	55

## **3. FINDINGS**

3.	<b>PRELIMINARY STUDY : SMALL FIRMS OWNER-MANAGERS' VISIONS OF SUCCESS .....</b>	<b>56</b>
3.1.	METHODS DESIGN .....	57
3.2.	FINDINGS.....	61
3.2.1.	Contents of the interviews.....	61
3.2.2.	Ranking scale results .....	63
3.3.	PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS.....	66

4.	<b>CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - DEFINITIONS .....</b>	<b>67</b>
4.1.	LEXICAL INSIGHTS .....	68
4.2.	DISCUSSION ON THE NOTIONS OF GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE ..	72
4.3.	DEFINITION OF SUCCESS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	74



4.4.	SATISFACTION, ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS .....	77
4.5.	SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS .....	80
5.	<b>METHODS .....</b>	<b>82</b>
5.1.	RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS .....	83
5.1.1.	General research questions : Small firm owner-managers' visions of success and the importance of non economic concerns .....	83
5.1.2.	Exploring gender-based differences in visions of success .....	86
5.1.3.	Hypothesis testing : high- and low success perceivers, satisfaction and business performance .....	87
5.2.	FROM CONCEPTUALISATION TO OPERATIONALISATION OF SUCCESS.....	88
5.3.	EMPIRICAL STUDY - METHODS AND RESEARCH DESIGN.....	92
5.3.1.	Sampling procedure .....	92
5.3.2.	Data collection and analyses .....	94
6.	<b>FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>98</b>
6.1.	RESPONDENTS' VISIONS OF SUCCESS .....	99
6.1.1.	Respondents' characteristics and profile .....	99
6.1.2.	Visions of success .....	109
6.1.3.	Synthesis and conclusion.....	114
6.2.	EXPLORING GENDER-BASED COMPARATIVE VISIONS OF SUCCESS.....	116
6.2.1.	Groups of respondents' respective characteristics and profiles.....	116
6.2.2.	Comparative visions of success .....	122
6.2.3.	Synthesis and conclusion.....	127
6.3.	HIGH- AND LOW SUCCESS PERCEIVERS : HYPOTHESIS TESTING .....	130
6.3.1.	High- and low success perceivers' backgrounds.....	131



6.3.2.	Relative importance of each dimension and levels of success achievement .....	132
6.3.3.	Professional success and related issues.....	134
6.3.4.	Familial success, work and private life.....	136
6.3.5.	Personal success, initial motivations and global satisfaction.....	137
6.3.6.	Synthesis and hypothesis acceptance .....	139
<b>7.</b>	<b>DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>141</b>
7.1.	SUMMING UP THE INITIAL AIMS AND EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS .....	142
7.2.	BENEFITS AND CONTRIBUTIONS.....	143
7.2.1.	Empirical support to the conceptual framework and the IGS method.....	143
7.2.2.	The Index for Global Success : firm's performance and beyond .....	145
7.3.	IMPLICATIONS .....	147
7.4.	LIMITS AND METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS.....	150
7.4.1.	Subjectivity and related methodological remarks .....	151
7.4.2.	Rationale for the empirical part and structure validity .....	152
7.4.3.	Context-dependency and durability .....	153
7.4.4.	Limits of the data collection .....	154
7.5.	ROUTES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH .....	155
7.5.1.	The notion of failure.....	155
7.5.2.	Investigation of the variables influencing the vision of success .....	155
7.5.3.	International comparison .....	157
	<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>159</b>
	<b>APPENDIX ONE - QUESTIONNAIRE – ENGLISH VERSION.....</b>	<b>172</b>
	<b>APPENDIX TWO - GLOBAL RESULTS.....</b>	<b>187</b>



## LIST OF THE FIGURES

Figure 1.1. - Structure of the dissertation .....	23
Figure 2.1. - Traditional approaches in the entrepreneurship personality research literature .....	25
Figure 2.2. - A synchronic view of the constructivist framework ( <i>Bouchikhi, 1993</i> ) .....	32
Figure 2.3. - The revised model of entrepreneurial and business performance ( <i>Delmar, 1996: 67</i> ) .....	32
Figure 2.4. - Historical evolutions in the meaning of success in the United States of America ( <i>adapted from S. L. Recken, 1993</i> ) .....	50
Figure 3.1. - Ranking scale – Success indicators.....	59
Figure 3.2. - Presentation of the owner-managers interviewed and their firms.....	60
Figure 3.3. - Owner-manager's selected statements on success.....	61
Figure 3.4. - Success Indicators : average score, female and male indices .....	64
Figure 4.1. - Synthetical chart of the lexical analysis .....	71
Figure 4.2. – Level of analysis, measurement and focus of growth, performance and success notions .....	75
Figure 4.3. - Success, performance and growth inter-relationships .....	76
Figure 4.4.- Satisfaction as the result of a discrepancy between goals and perceived achievement.....	79
Figure 5.1. – Constitutive elements of professional, familial and personal success .....	85
Figure 5.2. – The conception of success .....	89
Figure 5.3. – The Index for Global Success.....	90
Figure 5.4. – Index for Global Success Formula.....	90
Figure 5.5. – Details for the initial send out.....	96
Figure 5.6. – Selection process of the replies.....	96
Figure 6.1. – Sectors of activities of the respondents' firms and of French small firms.....	99
Figure 6.2. – Respondents' educational background (last diploma obtained) .....	104
Figure 6.3. - Origin of the capital.....	104



Figure 6.4. - Proportion of respondents running other business(es) .....	105
Figure 6.5. – Business(es) performance figures .....	107
Figure 6.6. – Relative weight of the economic, familial and political logic in the respondents' decision making.....	111
Figure 6.7. – Relative importance of the familial, professional and personal dimensions in the respondents' global success .....	112
Figure 6.8. – Relative importance of and proportion of totally successful respondents in familial, professional and personal dimensions of success .....	113
Figure 6.9. – Main differences in the background and profile of the male and the female groups.....	121
Figure 6.10. – Main elements in the definitions of professional, familial and personal success by males and females.....	123
Figure 6.11. – Relative importance of the economic, political and familial logics in males' and females' decision making .....	124
Figure 6.12. – Relative importance of the professional, familial and personal dimensions in males' and females' global success .....	124
Figure 6.13. – Proportion of totally successful males and females in and relative importance of familial, professional and personal dimensions of success .....	126
Figure 6.14. – The IGS variable – Global results and sample scores .....	130
Figure 6.15. – Relative importance of the familial, professional and personal dimensions in high and low success perceivers' global success.....	132
Figure 6.16. – Relative importance of the economic, political and familial logics in high and low success perceivers' decision making .....	133
Figure 6.17 – Proportion of totally successful high and low success perceivers in familial, professional and personal dimensions of success .....	133
Figure 6.18 – Proportion of totally and quite successful high and low success perceivers in familial, professional and personal dimensions of success .....	134
Figure 6.19 – Correlation matrix – Satisfaction towards life, IGS score and net result after taxes .....	140



As written by Jean Legault, « In glorious years, academic research was based on the search for

## 1. INTRODUCTORY SECTION

supporting the research and today is an improved approximation of the world's complexity, and a

### 1.1. GENERAL CONTEXT : ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND NEW TRENDS

multiple realities

questions reflect

dissertation

1.1.1. New trends in performance measurement and wording

1.1.2. Information technologies, 'individuation' and the small firm

1.1.3. Entrepreneurs and founders as modern heroes ?

1.1.4. Beyond the economic rationale

1.1.5. Towards a better balance in life

1.1.6. Individuals' new expectations and vision of success

Crozier and Friedberg

1.1.7. Implications for the present research

% of the firms classified in the 1985 edition of the Fortune 500 had disappeared from a few

ten years

### 1.2. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

during the last century

1.2.1. History of the research topic

this is only an illustration

1.2.2. Summary of the dissertation sections' sequence

criteria's inadequacy

1.2.3. Aims and expected contributions

1.2.4. Methodological framework

1.2.5. Findings and main points of relevance

### 1.3. ORGANISATION OF THE DISSERTATION

the positioning of human beings as core elements of organisations and societies, for the

economic level, this is revealed by an official willingness to integrate the quality of the

calculation of nations' 'success'. National wealth creation and growth are no longer evaluated

through the only traditional GDP (Gross Domestic Product), but also through the HDI, the Human

Development Index. This index has been created at the end of the century by the United Nations

Development Program, and used since then to classify countries according to their

\* Durant les années 80, la recherche universitaire était avant tout dominée par l'économie, l'écologie, le management, etc. Les critères vers lesquels nous nous dirigeons aujourd'hui (qualité, éthique, développement durable, etc.) ne sont pas encore intégrés dans les modèles économiques traditionnels (LQAM), correspondant aux années 1980.



As written by Jean Legault, « In glorious years, academic research was based on the researchers' curiosity, now it must be oriented towards its socio-economic utility »<sup>1</sup>. The present work aims at supporting the research trend towards an improved appreciation of the world's complexity, and a constant effort to better understand it. To make its contribution, the present study explores the multiple realities of success : who can be considered as successful ? How is success defined ? These questions reflect the ambiguities of the notion of success which will be investigated in this dissertation.

## 1.1. GENERAL CONTEXT : ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND NEW TRENDS

Crozier and Sérieyx (1994) illustrate the change in the economic environment by observing that 40 % of the firms classified in the 1985 edition of the 'Fortune 500' had disappeared from it less than ten years later. The authors' explanation lies in the changes which firms and society had to face during the last century, especially in most recent years. Though an intriguing question is whether this is only an illustration for recent environmental changes, or also for traditional performance criteria's inadequacy.

### 1.1.1. New trends in performance measurement and wording

A strong concern is expressed by governmental organisations, researchers and society to re-consider the positioning of human beings as core elements of organisations and economics. At the macro-economic level, this is revealed by an official willingness to integrate human criteria in the calculation of nations' 'success'. National wealth creation and growth are no more evaluated through the only traditional GDP (Gross Domestic Product), but also through the HDI, the Human Development Index. This index has been created at the end of the eighties by the United Nations Development Program, and used since then to classify nations according to their related

---

<sup>1</sup> « Durant les années fastes, la recherche universitaire était axée sur la curiosité des chercheurs, elle doit maintenant être orientée vers son utilité socio-économique » - Pr. Jean Legault, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), correspondence with the author, 1996.



performance and evolutions. The HDI synthesises newly introduced indicators such as the level of education of the inhabitants, their income, or gender segregation (Colson, 1996).

A similar trend can be observed at the micro level in firms, where performance evaluation methods integrate new indicators such as absenteeism or employees well being. Atkinson, Waterhouse and Wells (1997) design a model for strategic performance measurement that combines both organisation goals, which are financial (profit), and secondary objectives which are usually non financial (customers satisfaction). Referring to the emergence of a new civilisation, Crozier and Sérieyx (1994) explain that the key words for performance are changing from "large number of employees, control, training", to "constant development of knowledge and competences, autonomy, individual and collective creativity". Hedge and Borman (1995) suggest that employees' performance appraisal must integrate the workers' increasing desire for autonomy and self-development. The notion of 'human capital' receives more and more concern in management theories and hence firms' strategies. Training sessions are organised within large firms on self-development or creativity improvement, with a strong trend from the United States.

Governmental reports give legitimacy and official support to the notions of 'social performance' and immaterial investments in the firm (Commissariat Général du Plan, 1994). The report from the Commissariat Général du Plan, published in 1994, states that « it is important to make it clear that though the Taylorist model has succeeded in building performance measurement tools in concordance with its objectives, the emerging management models are -from this point of view- in a phase of hesitation ».

In a recent book on small business management, Marchesnay and Fourcade stress the « gap between quantitative objectivity that might be performance, and a more subjective reality, in which performance is evaluated in terms of more qualitative indicators. Some talk about 'satisfactory performance' or 'effectivity' » (Marchesnay and Fourcade, 1997: 101).

This emerging concern reveals a necessary adaptation of performance criteria and wordings to the evolutions in the firms' environment and the new methods of work.



### 1.1.2. Information technologies, 'individuation' and the small firm

New technologies and the Internet development change the way people learn and work, with increased opportunities to work at home or get distance learning. New information technologies introduce a paradoxical fear of individualisation whereas people more than ever interact within networks. Gaudin (1990) has introduced the word 'individuation' to grasp this emerging reality. He suggests that, after a phase of egoism and pre-eminence of the 'Me' in the seventies, the coming years should see the emergence of the 'individuation'. This new word means independence within a collective destiny. Individuation is expected to be « the main governing force of mankind's development in the 21st century » (Gaudin, 1990: 376). In the business sphere, the most appropriate place for individuation seems to be in small firms : these entities fulfil the individual's need for independence, paired with the willingness of acting for the whole community. As explained by Duchéneau (1996a), « the desire for 'individuation' will change companies' hierarchical structures, from horizontal relationships to vertical ones. This kind of change is only possible in small units, be they independent (small businesses) or parts of larger groups (subsidiaries, plants) ». He also concludes that « in this context, the entrepreneur will be the key character in the 21st century economy. This term does not simply refer to primacy in ownership. It is basically the ability to be a driving force, an innovator, a creator, to stimulate the development of personal individuality and potentiality within the structure around him. »

### 1.1.3. Entrepreneurs and founders as modern heroes ?

In the area of corporate success, 'entrepreneurs' with their 'success stories' are often depicted as the new heroes of the modern capitalist era. As Gartner (1993) explains, "the word 'creation' evokes some picture of a creator (typically the heroic version : e.g. Simon Bolivar, Henry Ford, Bill Gates, etc.) and some sense of the creator's intentions in this process". Gartner is however "bothered by the underlying heroic view on human action that it suggests ...". To avoid this kind of systematic view, Gartner prefers to refer to the 'founder' rather than to the 'creator' : « whereas the noun form of founder describes a person who establishes something, the verb form of founder describes a type of



failure. The double meaning of founder suggests the equivocal nature of creation as a process, rather than assuming that creation is always a successful outcome » (Gartner, 1993: 234). Even though they may not always be successful heroes, business founders, entrepreneurs and small firms' owner-managers are generally seen as potential 'saviors' and a response to economic crisis. They are often considered as the dynamic and driving force for a nation's economy, concentrating the hopes for unemployment reduction and economic growth. Even though the 'mice vs. gazelles' debate (Birch, 1979, 1983) addresses the question whether many small businesses contribute to new employment (Davidsson et al. 1997, Davidsson and Delmar 1997), or whether only a few high growth firms create this dynamic (Storey 1994), a large number of studies has demonstrated the importance of small and medium enterprises in new job creation.

The notion of 'citizen firm' and its counterpart of social duties were born in the nineties, together with the social demand towards the business community to produce not only profit, but also socio-economic utility. Modern businesses are due to be environmental-friendly, to guarantee their employees' well being, generate wealth and create new jobs. Their leaders do experience a real pressure from the community in these directions. However, do small firms owner-managers actually *want* to grow their firms and create new jobs ?

#### 1.1.4. Beyond the economic rationale

Beyond economic constraints and legitimacy, some researchers highlight the influence of non economic factors on decision making. Academic research on growth processes produces increasing empirical support to the existence of non economic barriers to growth and of other legitimate forces. Authors suggest that the economic rationale cannot explain all of the owner-managers' decisions, and that other factors need to be taken into account (Bauer 1995, Davidsson 1989, Wiklund et al 1997, Wiklund 1996). The notion of "having fun" is for example an important decisive component for the small firm's owner-manager discussed by Brytting (1991) : « The manager chooses to develop opportunities that allow him to have fun (...) It describes an immediate evaluation of a situation, often without any reflections or signs of doubt. It is simply an intuitive feeling, seemingly of a non-cognitive nature. It is highly decisive, because it precedes any



rationalizations or reflections. Rational reflection is more or less an effort to reconstruct some kind of logic behind one's immediate evaluations » (Brytting, 1991: 167-168). Non-economic concerns are thus more and more taken into account when studying owner-manager's decision making, especially as far as growth processes are concerned. These empirical results suggest that the manager may not actually *want* to grow, even though s/he has the capacity to develop the firm (Wiklund, 1996). The consequences in terms of policy and unemployment reduction through economic growth of small firms may be crucial.

In the same time, workload reduction is suggested by some politicians and economists as an alternative mean to reduce unemployment rates (previous Minister Rocard, Minister Aubry's recent implementation of the 35 hours-week in France), consequently giving more space to non-professional activities, leisure time and personal life. This trend seems to reflect the willingness from new workers to make only limited sacrifices between their work and familial or personal life.

#### 1.1.5. Towards a better balance in life

More globally, a strong concern is expressed for a better balance between professional activities and private leisure time, acting as an echo to the evolution in mentalities and the increasing importance of personal development. A study on social representations of economic beliefs by Lunt, Williams and Olafsson (1998) reveals that the items 'employed mothers' and 'more leisure time' are respectively given a mark of 3.18 and 3.13 out of five by an English sample. Even though the analysis of these data suggests that 'employed mothers' may rather be seen as a negative element linked to unemployment rates, these scores still reflect a strong concern (Lunt et al., 1998: 46). Mirvis and Hall (1994) also illustrate this trend for a better balance in life with the following extracts as an introduction to their paper :

"Takatsuki, Japan - At 7:00 one Friday evening, when they would usually be dutifully at their desks, 40 or so executives of Sunstar Cooperation stepped into the company's auditorium for the latest in Japanese employee training : a course in the art of being a family man. From 'Japan's astounding future : life with father', New York Times, November 12, 1993, p.4."



"Washington, D.C. - There's just one problem with working for a living : there's no time left for life. From 'Workers want to get a life', USA Today, September 3, 1993, p.1."

The authors introduce the notion of "boundaryless career" of the individual, not only within organisations, but also as a spouse, parent, or community member (Mirvis and Hall, 1994). Individuals stand in the middle of various professional, familial and personal spheres that revolve around them. The overlapping of these spheres is empirically supported by the interviews findings presented in section 3. One of the interviewees synthesised his vision of success through the concern for "the necessary balance within the professional / familial / personal success tripod". The multidimensional aspects of success are developed in section 2.3.2. Consequently to theory and empirical evidence, it has been decided to focus in the present dissertation on these three dimensions: professional, familial and personal success (see section 4).

The overlapping of these dimensions is reinforced by distance working via the internet and the 'soho' (small office, home office) phenomena. The increasing proportion of female employment also contributes to making this trend more accurate. The borders between male and female roles, as well as the boundaries between professional and domestic or private dimensions tend to disappear in some countries. As an illustration for this phenomenon, more and more large American firms offer cleaning- or baby-sitting services on the workers' place of work. In small businesses, it is widely admitted that the owner-manager is totally committed to the firm, and that his/her private life revolves around the business. This overlapping is even more visible in small family businesses where spouses and even children work together within the same firm. It becomes then obvious that private and work life are closely linked, and that they cannot be operated as strictly distinct. As a combination of both these factors, women owner-managers appear to be a most relevant population to study the overlapping of professional, personal and familial dimensions. It is decided to focus on gender as a discriminating variable for the empirical survey (see comparative analysis in section 6.2).



As underlined by Crozier and Serieyx (1994), the Ford-Taylorist model of organisation does not fit young generations' aspirations anymore. They have new values and models, according to which quality of life is of higher importance than dollars (Crozier and Serieyx, 1994: 51-52). The authors argue that time for the ostensible money cult is past. Expectations differ and success is not expressed in the same terms as it used to. According to a study on the French population, 67% of the respondents think that less attention should be paid to money and other materialistic goods, 85% wish that more attention be given to the individual's personal flourishing, 89% to the family life (Riffault, 1994). This observation can interestingly be related to a study by Recken (1993) who analyses the evolution of the word 'success' in the United States during the depression of the 1930s. His results show that the meaning of success is subject to changes and covers varying notions according to the socio-economic environment and historical period studied.

Modern workers' search for well-being goes together with an increasing attitude of risk-avoidance, that is often explained as a response to the recent economic crisis. Money and power, as well as the 'performance cult' are outdated. Young generations primarily seek welfare and personal development, both at work and more globally. It appears that the concept of success moves from a socially defined, objective norm, toward a more individual and subjective view. Whilst success can be studied through both objective and subjective dimensions, in this context the approach selected for the present dissertation is that of the individual and subjective view of success. Yet, objective data related to success are not dismissed. Some are integrated in the survey and analysed in relation with subjective data in section 6.3.

As further developed in sections 2 and 4, success is defined as a psychological and social construct that needs to be studied at the individual's level. In the present research, a general definition for success could be labelled as : *an ideal state of global satisfaction that may relate to family, personal or work fulfilment feelings, according to individual preferences*. While satisfaction is rather referred to as 'perceived achievement' and limited to one specific dimension, success is defined as an overall state of satisfaction, encompassing professional, familial and personal dimensions.



### 1.1.7. Implications for the present research

In this context of strong changes, Serieyx explains the difficulty to change minds, as past organisations are like mental jails to us and keep us from seeing things in a new and different way (Crozier and Serieyx, 1994: 42). A reflection on the notion of 'success' and on new evaluation methods however needs to be conducted as a necessary step to move and adapt to the 21st century and its new methods of work and life. The 'individuation' phenomena, and the trend to re-place individuals in the core of the economic system legitimise the choice to conduct this reflection at the individual level. The increasing importance of non-economic factors at the macro-, micro- or individual-level also supports that further investigation be conducted in that direction within the present research.

Three analyses are developed: the first one focuses on the representation of the entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs are depicted as modern heroes and the expectations expressed towards small firms and their managers to act as dynamic economic entities, generate wealth and reduce employment, place them on the edge of the debate. The notion of success is therefore most accurately studied, if ever, in this field. Entrepreneurship and small business research are in a phase of great expansion, attention being increasingly focused on these entities, at the cross-road of economics (the business), sociology (the community unit) and psychology (the business leader). The particularities of small firms as well as the characteristics of entrepreneurs have become central issues to social sciences researchers. A recent trend aims at integrating both economic and psychological dimensions to generate global models towards a better understanding of the entrepreneurial phenomena (Delmar, 1996: 4). The present doctoral dissertation consists in a research effort in that direction and aims at re-constructing the concept of 'success' through a subjective approach, and study this concept through the lenses of small firms' owner-managers.



## 1.2. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

The present dissertation is composed of two main parts. The first step lies in a conceptualisation research effort, which aims at re-constructing success and providing a new understanding of success as a subjective, individual-based concept encompassing three dimensions : professional, familial and personal success. Success is defined as : *an ideal state of global satisfaction that may relate to family, personal or work fulfilment feelings, according to individual preferences.*

The second part is an empirical study which is designed to illustrate this conceptual framework and contribute to extend our knowledge on small firms owner-managers' visions of success. An evaluation method, based on the Index for Global Success (IGS), is elaborated for that purpose. Three analyses are developed : the first one describes the respondents' global characteristics and visions of success, the second study explores males' and females' visions of success, and the last one tests the research hypothesis on the links between Index for Global Success, business performance and individual satisfaction. This is achieved through the comparative analysis of high- and low success perceivers, identified on the basis of their IGS score. This analysis enables to test the IGS method relevance.

The findings demonstrate that success needs to be studied at the individual's level as a subjective construct and that the use of a composite index to evaluate success enables to gather the overlapping dimensions composing success. The importance of personal and familial dimensions, beyond professional success, receives empirical support. Females prove to have different visions of success than males, placing higher concern on the personal dimension. Finally, the Index for Global Success enables to generate subsamples which differ in their levels of satisfaction and firm's performance. Statistical significance tests and a correlation matrix establish that 'success' (evaluated through the Index for Global Success), business performance and individual satisfaction are positively correlated. It is concluded that the IGS method evaluates success in a relevant way.



### 1.2.1. History of the research topic

The initial research aimed at determining characteristics in the owner-managers' profile that influence the small firm's performance. The review of existing literature (trait theory, performance predictive models) revealed that this approach had already been extensively researched. There was a need for re-adjustment. In addition to the literature review, reflection efforts focused on methodology, specifically on the notion of performance. The main challenging issue was to define and measure it properly. In order to identify relevant determinants of performance in the owner-manager's profile, a classification of high-performance and low-performance firms was needed... On which basis ? There appeared to be little alternative, as most researchers use traditional economic or financial criteria to evaluate performance, such as profit or increase in turnover. A Delphi method was envisaged, to get to know experts' opinion about « acceptable levels of performance ». A simple around-the-average method was another possibility. However none of these solutions proved satisfactory. It seemed to me that these objective indicators were useful under given circumstances, for specific purpose, but that they were limited in their scope as far as they failed to grasp non-economic aspects of performance.

In the same time, I became more familiar to the notion of growth (Delmar 1996, Wiklund 1996), the need for contextualisation and social constructionism (Steyaert and Bouwen, 1997), the importance of an adequate choice of research unit and perspective (Rosa and Scott, 1996). I realised that performance, in its traditional understanding, was not the notion I wanted to study. The lack of reflection on an extended, multidimensional definition, as well as the lack of contextualisation, indicated me the path to a relevant research subject which could make a real contribution. The central construct was not performance or growth, but 'success', as explained in section 4. The research unit was not the firm, but the individual – the owner-manager. The indicators were not mirrors of a tangible reality, but of subjective elements : expectations and perceptions.

A conceptual framework was elaborated for this doctoral research on small firms' owner-managers' visions of success, with a specific concern for the individualisation and subjectivity of success. This dissertation aims at providing an in-depth study of success in a subjective perspective.



### 1.2.2. Summary of the dissertation sections' sequence

In the present doctoral research, success is studied as a complex and multi-dimensional notion, rather than defined only through the traditional economic performance, which is the most widely spread use. A move from the external assessment of success to an internal evaluation is proposed.

A critical review of the literature is made in SMEs and entrepreneurship research, but also in other relevant fields such as psychology, sociology or history. The findings of preliminary interviews with small firms' owner-managers are presented, which result, together with previous literature, in the elaboration of the conceptual framework. The framework explicits the inter-relationships between the notions of growth, performance and success and provides the definitions and conceptual basis for the dissertation. In this doctoral research, success is studied as a subjective notion, an individual construct, and a three-dimensional notion encompassing familial, professional and personal success. Following this conceptual work on the notion of success, an empirical study is conducted in order to provide an answer to the research questions and test the research hypothesis. These relate to the respondents' visions of success, the importance of non-economic concerns and more specifically on gender-based differences in visions of success. The IGS method relevance is tested through the link between IGS, business performance and individual satisfaction. The differences between high- and low success perceivers are also questioned.

The operationalisation of success is made possible through a new evaluation method which finds direct applications in the study. Within this method, the *definition* of success integrates the elements reported by the respondents in their definitions for professional, familial and personal success. The combination of these items with the respective weights given to each dimension is referred to as the *conception* of success. The Index for Global Success (IGS) is finally elaborated to evaluate individuals' success according to their own criteria. The IGS is defined as the function of reported levels of perceived achievement weighted by the importance given to each dimension of success.

These methodological tools are used in the study of 236 small firms' owner-managers, in order to determine their visions of success and test the research hypothesis. Gender-based groups of respondents are created, and a comparison is made on their respective visions of success. The respondents are also classified according to their level of IGS to observe whether differences



between 'high-' and 'low success perceivers' can be identified, and whether a relationship can be established between IGS, business performance and individual satisfaction.

A discussion is made on the benefits and limits of the approach. Implications of the findings are presented. Finally, recommendations are made for further research on the notion of success for small firms' owner-managers.

### 1.2.3. Aims and expected contributions

The main expected contribution of the present research is to provide an in-depth study on success, conceptualised as a subjective and individual-based notion. It aims at becoming a basis for further reflection on the concept of success.

The main aims and expected contributions of this doctoral work are to :

- provide a reference basis on the notion of success for small firms' owner-managers
- re-construct success beyond the all-economic rationale as composed of three dimensions :  
professional, familial and personal success
- re-construct success as an individual-based construct and a subjective notion
- elaborate a framework to describe the relationships between growth, performance and success
- elaborate, apply and test an operationalised evaluation method for success
- extend the knowledge on owner-managers' visions of success
- explore gender-based differences in visions of success
- explore differences between 'high-' and 'low-success perceivers'
- test the link between IGS, business performance and individual satisfaction.

The conceptual contribution consists in a redefinition of the concept of success. A framework is elaborated for a better use of the notions of growth, performance and success as related to each other in terms of levels of analysis.

Methodologically, the investigation and analysis is made possible by the operationalisation of success and the elaboration of a new evaluation method.



The empirical contribution lies in the study of small firms' owner-managers' visions of success, determined through interviews and postal survey. A comparative study is conducted on a gender basis to explore the respondents' visions of success. High- and low-success perceivers (based on the respondent's own vision of what success means) are also observed to determine whether differences can be identified, to test the research hypothesis and test the IGS method.

The general purpose is to contribute to a widened knowledge about success and its evaluation, and to provide alternative, seldom explored perspectives. The study of small firms' owner-managers' visions of success is the platform for this.

#### 1.2.4. Methodological framework

The methodological framework underlying the dissertation is presented through the need for a multidisciplinary approach and the insights gained from the grounded theory approach. While an overview of the methodology is given in this section, the methods design is fully described in section 5.

#### The need for a cross disciplinary approach

The notion of success may be approached in various ways. A sociological perspective may be applied while studying success within a community, as part of the individual's social identity. Psychologically, the meaning of success for the individual may be questioned, as well as the process how this conception of success is elaborated in relation with profile-related elements. At a financial or economic level, success may be studied as business performance.

These perspectives lie at different levels of analysis and in the context of various disciplines. However, it is argued that an interesting way to study success is to stand at the corner of these approaches and gather related issues into a cross disciplinary study. This can be achieved at the individual's level, by integrating both endogenous elements (the individual's profile) and exogenous variables (historical period, socio-economic context, familial environment) influencing the individual's vision of success.



Brytting (1991: 187) argues that « we must accept that small firms are important contemporary forms of self-expression. From this perspective, small firms should be studied by humanists, as well as by economists, sociologists and psychologists ». James McClelland (1997), a scientific specialist of brain activity, explains : « We can think about mental activity as arisen from brain activity, and I think it makes a lot of sense to think about it that way. But when you think only in those terms, what you miss is the fact that mental activity exists within a experiential, cultural, social, linguistic context that plays a tremendous role in determining just what the structure and content of that cognitive activity would be. (...) For me as a connectionist, what's really most important is learning how better to understand how it is that experience gets into the memory system, restructures it, shapes it, organizes it, causes it to produce a mind that actually conforms and resonates with a particular environmental, cultural and social context. » (McClelland, 1997). With these statements, both researchers suggest that environmental, cultural, social, linguistic and psychological elements must be taken into account when studying small firms and cognitive processes.

It lies beyond our purpose to grasp exhaustively all these perspectives, but an attempt to integrate them is made, in order to get a better understanding of the notion of success. The references selected in the literature review, as well as the issues discussed in the empirical section, reflect this concern for a broader approach of success. A multidisciplinary approach with insights from entrepreneurship, psychology, sociology, linguistics and history is favoured in the present dissertation. Different studies are used for this purpose, such as Recken's (1993) study on the historical evolutions of the meaning of the word "success" in the United States, or the doctoral research by Motlagh (1995) on Mexican-American women's definitions of success, conducted within an ethnic and sociological approach.

### Grounded theory approach as a source of inspiration

Although not following Glaser and Strauss' (1967) principles of data organisation into categories and properties, the theoretical guidelines have been inspired by what Brytting (1991) expressed and the way he supported the use of inductive, grounded theory approach : « Instead of starting with theoretically derived hypothesis, it was determined necessary to start from the actual actions and



perceptions of small firms owner-managers. » (Brytting, 1991: 82). Deriving from the original work by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory is a label for methods aiming at generating theory from empirical data through an inductive analytical process. In this context, the approach is based on a parallel development of theory and data collection. However, the present doctoral research was conducted in continuous relation with existing theories and literature. As argued by Brytting (1991), in order to avoid total 'empiricism' or to restate the researcher's own preconceptions, a close connection to prior theoretical knowledge is necessary when conducting this type of research (Brytting, 1991: 205, 207).

It is also claimed that some degree of innocence may be a valuable advantage for the emergence of original contribution. As explained by Glaser, the openness of the researcher enhances theoretical sensitivity, both to the data and to the theoretical linkages of these data : « Indeed, the analyst with this complete openness is often more receptive to the emergent than others with a few pre-ideas and perspectives. He has less ideational baggage to give up or correct. » (Glaser, 1978: 44). My interest in the topic and knowledge of the academic community have started only lately in higher education. This lack of experience was taken advantage of, with the use of this 'innocence' to maintain the ability to get surprised and provide a fresh look to ongoing debates.

Grounded theory approach is thus adopted as a source of inspiration rather than a methodological framework, as the present research is not purely inductive and does not rely only on empirical data, but rather emerges from a go-and-return process between empirical data and related literature.

### Methodology overview

Existing literature on success was reviewed, with a selection of references relevant to the present research. In parallel, exploratory interviews were conducted with owner-managers on success-related issues. The interviews raised relevant research questions and hypotheses, stimulated creativity and intuition, supporting the choice to combine primary and secondary sources of data.

The conclusions drawn from the literature review, and the insights gained from the preliminary findings of the interviews, led to the elaboration of the conceptual framework and the research questions and hypothesis.



The shift from conceptualisation to operationalisation was materialised by the creation of an evaluation method for 'success', which was applied in an empirical study conducted through postal survey. The questionnaire was designed according to previous insights and the research hypotheses. The 236 replies were processed and analysed to provide general information on the respondents' visions of success, to test the research hypothesis, and globally to answer the research questions synthesised below and formulated in section 5.

### Research questions and hypotheses

The first research question is a methodological one, developed in section 5 on methods.

*Q.1 - How can success be operationalised and evaluated ?*

The following general research questions relate to the owner-managers' visions of success. They are addressed in an exploratory and descriptive way in section 6.1.

*Q.2 - How do the respondents define professional, personal and familial success ?*

*Q.3 - Which relative weight do they give to each of these dimensions ?*

*Q.4 - How do they perceive their own achievement in each dimension of success ?*

*Q.5 – What is the importance of non-economic concerns in the respondents' visions of success ?*

It was then decided to focus on an objective variable to split the sample and conduct an exploratory comparative analysis. Gender as an objective and discriminating variable was identified as the most relevant item (see sections 2.4.2. and 5.1.2.). The gender-based differences in the respondents' visions of success are explored in section 6.2., according to the following research question :

*Q.6. Do male and female respondents' visions of success differ?*

Finally, the research hypothesis focuses on the link between the owner-manager's Index for Global Success (IGS), business performance and levels of satisfaction. Previous research (Riffault 1994, Rothberg 1990) establish a correlation between work satisfaction and overall satisfaction or well being. Bruyat (1994) also suggest that success is the combination of both business performance and individual satisfaction. These research works are developed in section 5.1.3.

*H.7 – High success perceivers also report higher levels of business performance and global satisfaction.*



High- and low success perceivers are identified on the basis of their IGS score and a comparative analysis is conducted in section 6.3. The research hypothesis is tested and accepted in this section.

#### 1.2.5. Findings and main points of relevance

The main conclusion drawn from the general results is that they provide empirical support to the integration of non-economic aspects when considering individuals' success. They suggest that the respondents give a high importance to familial and personal concerns beyond the professional dimension in their own success. This balance between professional, familial and personal success provides empirical support to the conceptual framework designed to study success as a three-dimensional concept.

The evaluation method for success (research question Q.1) is developed in section 5 and labelled Index for Global Success (IGS). The formula designed for the Index for Global Success calculation is validated by the empirical findings which suggest that the higher the importance given to a dimension of success, the higher the respective level of success achievement reported by the respondents.

Finally, the Index for Global Success enables to generate subsamples which significantly differ in their levels of satisfaction and firm's performance. It is concluded that the IGS method is a relevant tool to evaluate success.

#### General findings

The research questions and their related findings can be synthesised as follows :

##### *Q.2 - How do the respondents define professional, personal and familial success ?*

Globally, the respondents report little concern for money and materialistic aspects of success. As far as the professional dimension of success is considered, the respondents define success in terms of the firm's durability, profitability or development, rather than considering the side benefits they could take advantage of. They define familial success more in terms of having their children raised



in a stable environment and transmitting them values, than being strongly present on their sides or providing them with a legacy. The importance of values and principles is observed both in the respondents' definitions of familial and personal success. When defining personal success, the respondents seem to be rather self-oriented than concerned with social recognition or their social role.

*Q.3 - Which relative weight do they give to each of these dimensions ?*

It is found that the familial (38 %), professional (36 %) and personal dimensions (26 %) receive balanced weights within the respondents' global success (total being 100). This finding, legitimises the understanding of success as a three-dimensional concept and supporting the importance of extra-professional elements when considering small firms owner-managers' success.

*Q.4 - How do they perceive their own achievement in each dimension of success ?*

More respondents feel that they are totally successful as far as familial success is concerned (29 % of the respondents), while less of them perceive successful in the professional (20 %) and personal dimensions (15 %). It is observed that the higher the importance given to the dimension, the higher the proportion of respondents who feel totally successful in that dimension. This finding supports the use of the IGS evaluation method.

*Q.5 – What is the importance of non-economic concerns in the respondents' visions of success ?*

Together with the political concerns, familial aspects represent 49 % of the weights in the respondents' decision-making process (total being 100). Moreover, extra-professional elements account for 64 % in their global success. The understatement of familial and personal dimensions would thus lead to the omission of a great part of the individual's success.

Gender-based findings

*Q.6. Do male and female respondents' visions of success differ?*

Female respondents have a higher education level than males, but the latter are more experienced in creating and running businesses. Males run larger businesses and seem to be more growth-oriented and more optimistic about their firm's future. Females report a relatively more flexible and favoured education and familial environment than males. Their parents were also more often owner-



managers. As far as initial motivations and values are concerned, females appear to be relatively more family-oriented and to give more importance to personal accomplishment than males, who seem to be more materialistic and challenges-oriented. Money seems to be no strong determinant for females' satisfaction. While males define all the dimensions of success in a more pragmatic and materialistic way, females have a higher propension to select elements in relation with the individual development and accomplishment. Female respondents give a higher relative importance to the economic logic (maximising the profit) than the male group. It may be argued that women owner-managers need to affirm their economic concerns more strongly than males in order to gain legitimacy. A slightly higher proportion of female respondents also report that they have totally achieved professional success. Globally, females show a propension to report higher total levels of success achievement in average for all three dimensions. They give more importance to personal success than males and perceive themselves as more totally successful in this dimension. However the familial dimension is given slightly stronger importance by males who also report relatively higher familial success achievement. Female respondents have a higher Index for Global Success than males, what may be explained by their higher scores in personal success in relation with its perceived importance. This higher concern of females for personal matters is highlighted by the fact that females spend less working hours a week. They also have a much better perception of their family lives flourishing. Yet, more females perceive the difficulties encountered in combining work, family and personal lives. 27.1% of the female respondents are divorced or re-married, versus 12.2 % of the males. This may enhance females' concern to preserve their personal lives, while their lower number of children may explain their relatively lower concern for familial aspects.

#### Hypothesis testing : High- and low success perceivers (hIGS and lIGS)

As far as their background is concerned, high success perceivers are older than lIGS and they have a longer length of service in their firm. They have a lower educational level than lIGS. High- and low success perceivers' familial backgrounds do not show many differences. More lIGS' parents were owner-managers and lIGS have in larger proportions run a business before. On the other hand, hIGS



have more created their present firm and other businesses in the past five years. More of them currently run another business, and they have been doing so for a longer period of time than IIGS.

High success perceivers give higher importance to familial success and lower importance to personal success than IIGS. The professional dimension is given a similar weight by both groups of respondents. As far as the decisional process is concerned, high- and low success perceivers integrate economic, familial and political aspects in the same proportions.

While the IIGS' perceived levels of success achievement logically remain well below the levels reported by HIGS, they report slightly better success achievement for professional success than for personal and familial dimensions. As far as professional success is concerned, IIGS seem to be more concerned with the profitability of their firm. On the other side, HIGS are more concerned with its durability and development. This stronger concern of high success perceivers for long term perspectives can be related to their firms' results, which prove to be much better than for IIGS-run firms. HIGS manage larger firms, with better performance and growth achievement. They also report less difficulties for the business. High success perceivers appear to be more development oriented ; they receive higher income and report consequently higher levels of satisfaction. This suggests that the IGS evaluation method reflects both the firm's performance and related owner-manager's satisfaction. As far as familial success is concerned, low success perceivers define it more as sharing leisure time, ensuring one's family's living, and seeing one's children grow than high success perceivers. The latter select in higher proportions the household unity and stability, and the transmission of values to one's children. It appears that high success perceivers feel more satisfied with their private life and its combination with work than IIGS. Both groups define personal success in similar ways. They also both report a combination of familial motivations and personal ones in their initial decision to become an owner-manager. Satisfaction-related results confirm a higher level of global satisfaction for high success perceivers.

The findings suggest a significantly higher level of perceived achievement or satisfaction for high success perceivers. Business performance also appears to be linked with the respondents' high IGS scores. A correlation matrix confirms that all three variables : IGS score, satisfaction towards life and net result after taxes are positively correlated. It is argued that good business results are linked with higher levels of overall satisfaction and perceived success achievement, both professional and



in general, that have an impact on the IGS score. The research hypothesis *H.7 – High success perceivers also report higher levels of business performance and global satisfaction* is thus accepted. It is argued that the IGS evaluation method reflects both the firm's performance and related satisfaction of the owner-manager. The prediction power and the relevance of the Index for Global Success scale to measure individual success thus receive empirical support.

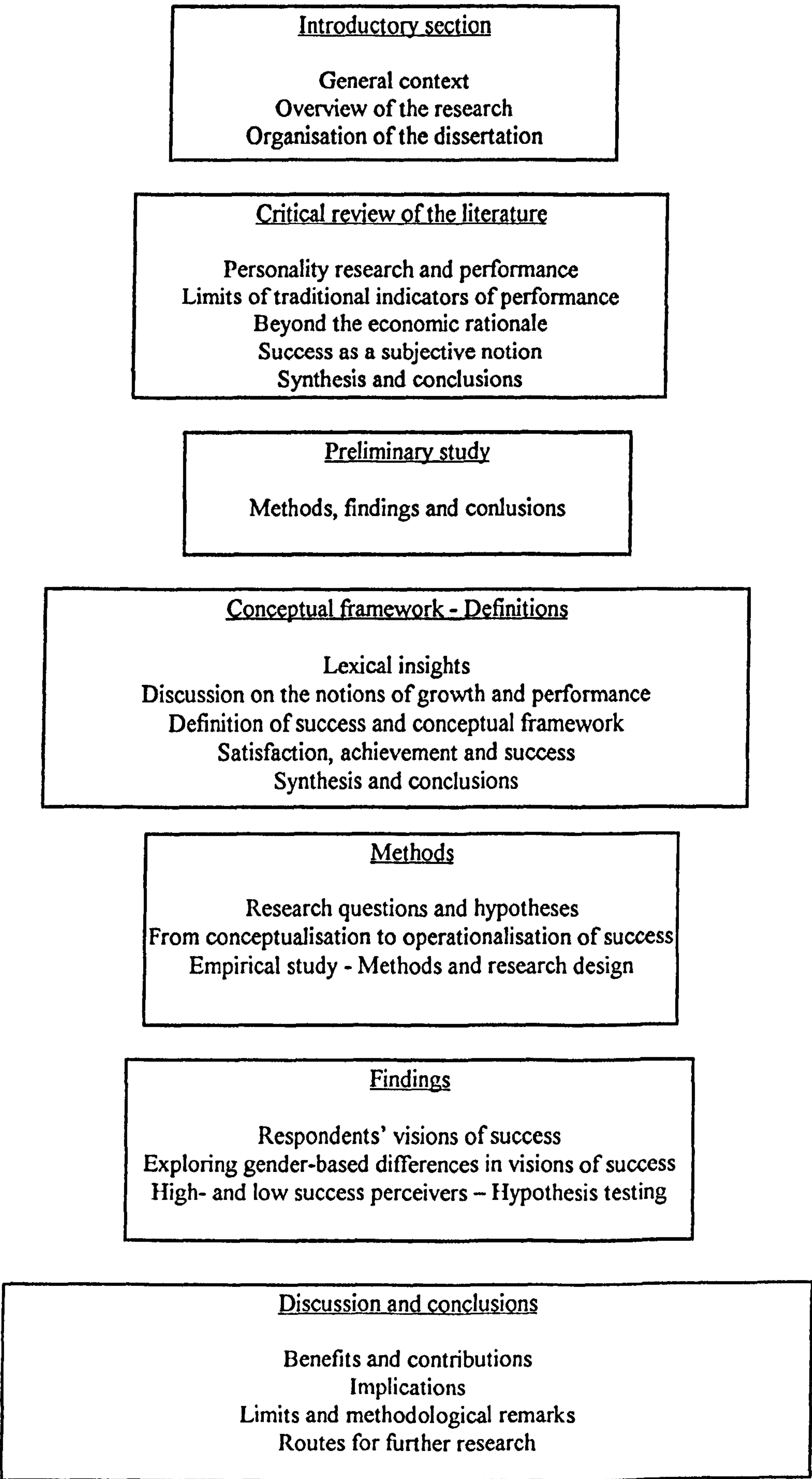
### 1.3. ORGANISATION OF THE DISSERTATION

Next section is dedicated to a critical literature review on specific issues relevant to our research. After a brief synthesis of personality research in entrepreneurship, the limits of traditional indicators of performance are highlighted. The purpose of the present study is underpinned by selected references which highlight the need for a re-conceptualisation of success beyond the all-economic thinking. Research efforts made towards a subjective definition of success are presented, and a synthesis of the main findings is made as a conclusion for this section. Preliminary findings from exploratory interviews with small firms' owner-managers on their visions of success, satisfaction and related issues, are presented in section 3. The conceptual framework and definitions used in the dissertation are drawn from both existing research and interviews results in section 4.

The research questions and hypotheses are developed in the methods section 5. After the conceptualisation effort, a methodological reflection is conducted on the operationalisation of success, resulting in the elaboration of an evaluation method and a specific tool, the Index for Global Success (IGS), in section 5. The methods design of the empirical survey is also described. In section 6, the findings in relation with the research questions and hypotheses are presented. The 236 respondents' visions of success are described, and exploratory analyses on a gender-basis are conducted. The IGS is also calculated for each respondent to determine whether differences between high- and low-success perceivers can be identified and to test the research hypothesis. A discussion is conducted, in connection with the findings, on the relevance, benefits and contributions of the IGS method in section 7. The implications of the research are also discussed. Finally, limits and methodological remarks are developed, and routes for further research are suggested to close the dissertation.



Figure 1.1. - Structure of the dissertation





## **2. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **2.1. PERSONALITY RESEARCH AND PERFORMANCE**

- 2.1.1. Entrepreneurs versus non-entrepreneurs: personality characteristics and typologies**
- 2.1.2. Predictive models of performance**
- 2.1.3. Appropriateness of the terms : entrepreneurial success and business performance**

### **2.2. LIMITS OF TRADITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE**

- 2.2.1. Lack of coherence**
- 2.2.2. Inadequacy with the particularities of success-related issues in small firms**
- 2.2.3. Incompleteness : the non economic and subjective dimensions of success**

### **2.3. BEYOND THE ECONOMIC RATIONALE**

- 2.3.1. Empirical support to the importance of non-economic concerns**
- 2.3.2. Success as a multidimensional concept**

### **2.4. SUCCESS AS A SUBJECTIVE NOTION**

- 2.4.1. A matter of perceptions**
- 2.4.2. A context dependent notion**

### **2.5. SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS**



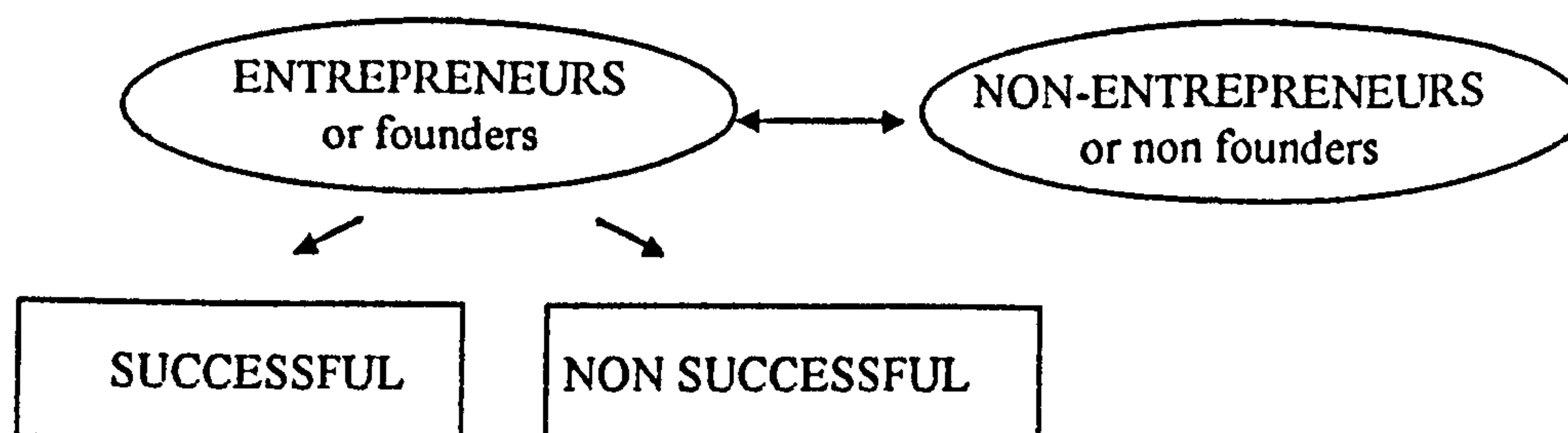
Even though the present research takes the small firms owner-managers' point of view to illustrate a new approach of success and its evaluation, it seems interesting not to limit the literature review to the SMEs area, but to widen it to entrepreneurship and other relevant fields. The selected references presented in this section all contribute to a better understanding of the problematic and implications of the present research. They also provide fruitful insights for the development of a new approach of success.

## 2.1. PERSONALITY RESEARCH AND PERFORMANCE

In 'Apostles of the self-made man', Cawelti wonders : "if in order to become successful one must first become confident, serene and happy, what then is the point of going on to become successful ?" (in Recken, 1993: 210).

Personality research in the entrepreneurship literature can be summarised in two main streams. The first problematic issue is to determine what distinguishes between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs. Then, within the entrepreneurial population, to find out the factors that influence the performance of the firm (characterising the 'successful' entrepreneurs), in order to provide predictive models of performance.

Figure 2.1. - Traditional approaches in the entrepreneurship personality research literature



The approaches described here are mainly individual-oriented, i.e. they aim at identifying these 'success' determinants within the individual's characteristics and profile. Other approaches will also be mentioned.



The aim of this section is not to provide an exhaustive review of the entrepreneurship literature, but rather to introduce the notion of performance as related to individual characteristics. It thus aims at providing an overview of personality research and the way it articulates with research on performance in small and entrepreneurial firms.

### 2.1.1. Entrepreneurs versus non-entrepreneurs : personality characteristics and typologies

The entrepreneurship research has since long aimed at identifying the traits that characterise the entrepreneur as opposed to the non-entrepreneur, or the small business owner-manager (Filion, 1997). Even though Gartner (1988) addresses that « Who is an entrepreneur ? is the wrong question », one must admit that this question has widely been discussed (Begley and Boyd 1987 ; Bellu, 1988 ; Carland, Hoy, Boulton and Carland, 1984).

The personality characteristics of the business leader, and especially of the entrepreneur, have been extensively studied (Brockhaus 1980 & 1982, Flamholtz 1990). McClelland has defined the entrepreneur as an individual with a high need for achievement (McClelland, 1961). Sexton and Bowman (1985) have found that internal locus of control was one determinant characteristic of the entrepreneur. The uni-dimensional approach of the entrepreneur's personality was however strongly criticised (Delmar, 1996: 14) and the need for multidimensional studies is now supported. The main entrepreneurial traits that have been identified are : need for achievement, internal locus of control, risk taking propensity, tolerance for ambiguity, overoptimism and need for autonomy.

Growth orientation is increasingly used as an indicator, beyond the trait approach or the traditional founding event (Schumpeter, 1934), to distinguish entrepreneurs from other types of business owners (Chell et al., 1991 ; Gray, 1998 ; Merz et al., 1994). Carland et al. (1984) point out that the goals of entrepreneurs and small business owners differ : entrepreneurs are more growth-oriented while small business owners prefer stability and familial concerns.

Delmar (1996) synthesises the definitions of the entrepreneur in three main ideas : the entrepreneur is a venture creator, at a given time in a given context, with a high growth propensity. Herrmann (1988: 351) defines the entrepreneur as an independent and imaginative person who launches a new venture, offering innovative products or services. It must though be underlined that the issue of



‘born or made’ entrepreneurs -life-time entrepreneurship, or entrepreneurship as an attitude at a given time in a given context, still tears researchers apart. Gray comments on Davidsson’s work (1989) by stating that « most people who start new businesses seem to have rather low levels of aspiration and, on attaining their goals, which frequently are little more than avoidance of unemployment or ‘making a living’, cease being entrepreneurial » (Gray, 1989).

Many typologies of business leaders have been achieved on the basis of their motivation. The PIC and CAP small business leaders defined by Marchesnay (1986) are respectively motivated by the durability of the firm or by growth. PIC stands for ‘*pérennité-indépendance-croissance*’ (*durability-independence-growth*), and CAP for ‘*croissance-autonomie-pérennité*’ (*growth-autonomy-durability*), each source of motivation being given according to its order of priority. The PIC types are strongly committed to their independence, while autonomy is a secondary issue for the CAP types, whose priority is the development of the firm. Other variables have also been used to develop typologies. Smith (1967) has identified the craftsman versus the opportunistic entrepreneur, based on differences in education, social involvement, social competence, and time orientation. This typology has more recently been extended by Miner, Smith and Bracker (1992) to the inventors-entrepreneurs.

### 2.1.2. Predictive models of performance

As stated by Carsrud and Olm, “the study of entrepreneurship is the examination of both individual owners and the various characteristics that affect the success of these entrepreneurs” (Carsrud and Olm, 1986: 148). Numerous models of prediction of performance have been designed through statistical analyses, describing the causality relationships identified between independent variables and the business’ performance. Three major sets of variables are used as explanatory factors of performance : the traits and behaviour of the owner-manager, the background and organisation of the business, and its relationship with the environment. Chance as a potential determinant of success was also integrated in global models (Bouchikhi 1993, Johannisson and Robertson 1997). Entrepreneurship research mainly focuses on the characteristics of the entrepreneur, and their use as performance predictors. Even though Gasse (1982) and Brockhaus (1980, 1982) have stated that



there was no clear relationship between the individual's characteristics and the firm's success, one of the major challenge in the small firms and entrepreneurship literature still lies in the prediction of survival, performance and growth of these ventures.

### Major streams of studies

As explained by Bouchikhi (1993), four major streams of studies address the entrepreneurial process and its outcomes :

- *endogenous explanations* : entrepreneur's personality-traits or behaviour-strategy are seen as key factors in explaining the outcome of entrepreneurial processes.
- *exogenous explanations* : derived from sociology and economics, they give the primacy to the environment as the most critical source of venture's success and failure.
- *combination endo- plus exogenous explanations* : additive models are causality models, which have been too much simplified for statistical purposes according to Bouchikhi. Moreover, the addition of explanations does not necessarily result in better prediction (Bygrave 1989a). Some authors have also made 'checklists' of the variables that favour the entrepreneurial outcome (Vesper 1990).
- *chaos theory* : prediction is impossible because « the entrepreneurship is a holistic process that cannot be analysed by reducing it to its individual parts » (Bygrave, 1989b: 9). « The ultimate destiny of any start-up company is difficult if not impossible to predict » (Smilor and Feeser, 1991: 165). The entrepreneurship process can only be seen as a black box, and thus no model can be applied.

### The endogenous trend

Within the endogenous trend, Miner (1997) has identified four entrepreneurial patterns leading to entrepreneurial success, defined in terms of growth and continuation of the entrepreneurial activity. These patterns are personal achievers, real managers, expert idea generators and empathic



supersalespeople. Each includes personality factors, used as predictors of entrepreneurial success. Miner also suggests that the more patterns the entrepreneur possesses (*complex entrepreneurs*), the more success the venture gets (Miner, 1997: 331).

McClelland and his co-workers have reported that training courses to develop small business owner-managers' achievement motive in developing countries significantly improved the performance of their businesses (Miron and McClelland, 1979). In their study on the success of male and female entrepreneurs, Carsrud and Olm (1986) have examined the statistical correlation of personality characteristics and multidimensional achievement motivation on success, defined as the employee productivity based on dollar sales volume and owner reports of market shares, in order to build a model for small business success prediction. Their results indicated that "motivational factors only seem to have an effect on the success of the firm when the owner had a minority interest in the organisation" (Carsrud and Olm, 1986: 158).

Begley and Boyd (1986) have demonstrated that founders had a significant and positive impact on the firm's performance, measured through growth rate, profitability and return on investment. However, Daily and Dalton (1992) conclude their study by stating that : « Results of this study do not distinguish the financial performance of firms based on founder versus professional management. Performance did not suffer when the founder remained CEO compared to a professional manager holding the position » (Daily and Dalton, 1992: 31).

As far as socio-demographics are concerned, the most recurrent factors identified to positively affect growth, survival and performance are the entrepreneur's education and experience (Cooper et al. 1994, Davidsson 1989). Davidsson also underlines the influence on growth need of the age and maturity of the entrepreneur (Davidsson, 1989). Yet, Brockhaus (1980) finds that successful entrepreneurs are younger (by 12 years) and more married than unsuccessful entrepreneurs, distinguished on the basis of business survival over three years of existence. The author explains the effect of age by the energy required by the activity to achieve success, and the positive influence of marriage as providing a financial and moral support to the entrepreneur (Brockhaus, 1980: 371). Storey's review suggests that age has an influence on growth, however the relationship is not clearly stated (Storey, 1994: 134). Storey also appears to suggest that gender has no significant effect on firm's performance, while a higher level of education has a positive influence (Storey, 1994: 137).



However, Loiseau and Dupont (1981) indicate that some of the factors linked with a good economic profitability are : a lower level of education (balanced by continued education and information awareness), and younger owner-managers. They find no significant relationship between the manager's growth willingness and profitability of the firm. The magazine 'L'Entreprise' gives a picture of the typical successful manager on the basis of the firm's growth and profitability over two years. The comparative results with a random sample of other business leaders suggest that more successful respondents have been managing their business for more than 10 years (61.9 % versus 51 %), and that they are slightly younger : 48 versus 50 years old (Kerdellant and Desnée, 1995). Cooper et al. (1994) suggest that having self-employed parents increases the chances of the firm's survival.

### Limits

Despite these conclusions, the debate is still open whether personality factors can be used as determinants for a venture's success. Brockhaus (1982) has underlined the fact that : « although much progress has been made in the past fifteen years, no clear link has yet been established between the personality characteristics of the entrepreneurs and the success of their business ventures » (Brockhaus 1982: 66). According to Delmar, these approaches in the entrepreneurship literature show limits and inconsistency, due to a lack of consensus. He also argues that most studies are based on the wrong assumption that the variables are stable and claims the need for a multidimensional approach of personality (Delmar, 1996: 13).

There is no end to the list of attributes that can be associated with entrepreneurship. One of the alternatives is suggested by Gartner (1988) who expresses his opinion that « who is an entrepreneur » is the wrong question, and that one should rather try to answer what does an entrepreneur do. He claims that the behaviour of entrepreneurs is more relevant to the creation of organisations than their psychological traits.



## Opinions studies

Beyond the studies where causality relationships are determined through statistical analyses, an interesting approach consists in identifying the owner-manager's own opinion about key success factors. Ibrahim and Goodwin (1986) have studied the perceived causes of success through a postal survey and interviews with owner-managers. The identified key factors, in the respondents' opinions, were entrepreneurial behaviour, managerial skills and environmental characteristics.

Montagno, Kuratko and Scarcella (1986) also surveyed business leaders and bank loan officers on their perception of success factors. It is interesting to note that, while the top six factors were common to both groups, business leaders ranked higher less measurable traits such as confidence, innovation and caring, whereas bank officials emphasised more quantifiable items.

This methodological framework, also used in cognitive mapping, is very interesting for our study, as it focuses on the individual's perception rather than quantifiable, objective reality. However, the purpose of these studies is still to identify *causes* of success rather than *define* what success means to the individuals surveyed. Despite the recent trend to orientate research on processes –verbs– rather than attributes –nouns–<sup>1</sup>, it appears from the literature review that the contribution of the present study lies in the focus on 'success' rather than on the long-studied 'succeeding'.

### 2.1.3. Appropriateness of the terms : entrepreneurial success and business performance

Indeed, the first questions to address when investigating the influence of variables on performance should obviously be : what is meant under the word 'performance' or 'success' ?, and : how is this performance defined and measured ?

As developed in section 4, a clear definition of what is meant by performance or success is required to ensure the significance of the research presented. In most studies, these words are used with no mention of the definition used by the author. Beyond a widespread use with seldom clarification,

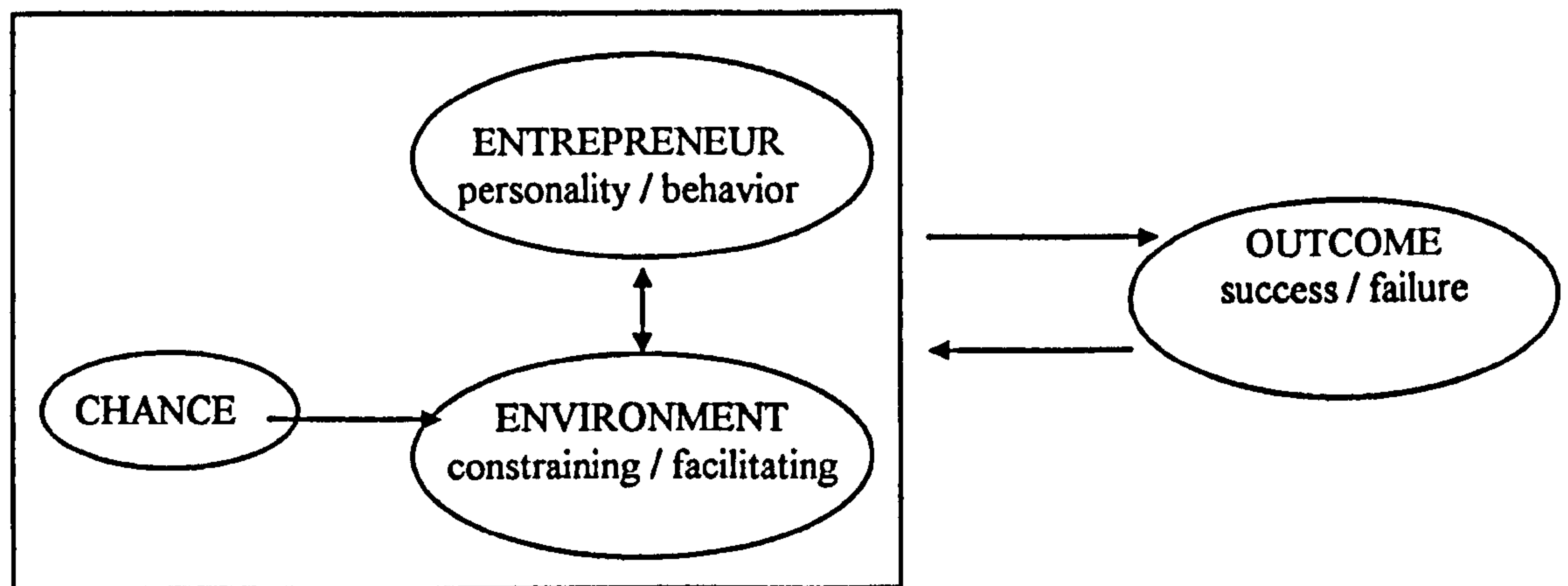
---

<sup>1</sup> e.g. the 'organising' versus the organisation (research work by Hjorth and Johannisson, SIRE, Sweden), the entrepreneurial behavior versus the entrepreneurial traits (Gartner, 1988).



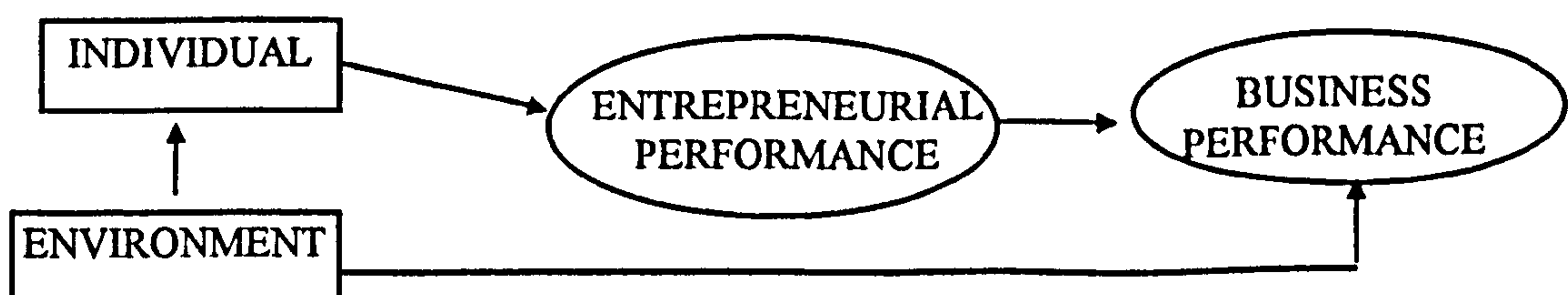
some researchers have however specified their areas of investigation through the use of more precise terms such as ‘entrepreneurial success’ or ‘business performance’ : Bouchikhi (1993), with a concern for appropriateness, researches the *entrepreneurial process* and its *outcomes* (success or failure), as described in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2. - A synchronic view of the constructivist framework (Bouchikhi, 1993)



Miner (1997) defines *entrepreneurial success* as the *entrepreneur's venture's growth*. Delmar (1996) distinguishes between the *entrepreneurial* and the *business performance*. He defines the entrepreneurial performance through growth motivation, how the individual chooses to act. Business performance, which is influenced by both entrepreneurial performance and the environment (organisational design and context), is measured through the risk buffer (difference between the return on investments and the return on debts), growth in turnover and number of employees, and through the debt / equity ratio.

Figure 2.3. - The revised model of entrepreneurial and business performance (Delmar, 1996: 67)





Marchesnay and Fourcade (1997) make the distinction between competitive performance, economic and financial performance, and organisational performance. They also introduce the notion of 'satisfactory performance' or 'effectivity', measured with more qualitative indicators (Marchesnay and Fourcade, 1997: 101).

The words and related definitions used in the present dissertation are presented within the conceptual framework developed in section 4.

## 2.2. LIMITS OF TRADITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

Performance and success are central notions when studying entrepreneurship, and though little research work has been done to clarify these concepts in small firms. The absence of a consensus on definitions and measurement methods generates incoherence in the studies. Moreover, the indicators used are not always adapted to the particularities of success-related issues in small firms, and often grasp only a small part of the success issue.

### 2.2.1. Lack of coherence

Most studies focus on traditional performance indicators, based on the firm's results (profitability, return on investment, sales growth). Francfort, Osty, Sainsaulieu and Uhalde (1995) conclude their review of the literature on the notion of performance by stating that there is no universal criterion for performance (Francfort et al., 1995: 499). The absence of a consensus regarding these notions and the diversity of the measures used to evaluate performance or growth generate inconsistency in the studies, the results of which are thus not replicable. As mentioned by Delmar, « Performance has been studied either as the ability to grow, survive or financial performance. The choice of performance measure influences the findings, both in which predictors are found to be relevant but also their impact on performance » (Delmar, 1996: 18). The various proxies used to measure performance and growth were reviewed by Wiklund (1998: 296). The variety and the influence of the criteria used to define failure rates was also studied by Watson and Everett (1996). Their conclusion is that, for the same population of firms, the calculated failure rate may vary from 1 to 9



% per annum, depending on the choice of the failure indicators used. This dependence of the results on the definition used, and the indicators selected, affects the reliability and validity of such studies. The findings and conclusions need then to be specified in a very defined context, which is seldom mentioned.

### 2.2..2. Inadequacy with the particularities of success-related issues in small firms

The particularities of small and entrepreneurial firms have been extensively discussed in academic research. In this context, it is intriguing to observe that the same evaluation tools are used for small and large companies with no specific concern for these differences. As stated by Welsh and White (1981), "A small business is not a little big business". The motivations, constraints, the environment and strategy differ radically, and these differences precisely support the need for a research effort towards indicators and approaches that integrate the small firms' and their owner-managers' particularities.

### Limits of the traditional performance indicators as applied to small firms

Brytting (1991) observes that small firms are not highly profitable organisations and suggests four explaining factors drawn from previous research : presence of economies of scale, power exerted by a few strong customers, low level of appropriations, and low reported profit for tax reasons (Brytting, 1991: 183). The financial and economic criteria traditionally used to define business performance are rarely favourable to small firms, especially start ups. Most of these small entities have no shareholders, and their financial priorities differ from large companies'. Small businesses owner-managers may put a higher importance on the financial health of the firm, while larger companies have to exhibit a good result. In order to attract shareholders and provide a good ratio dividends / results, they may need to go into debt. Moreover, as indicated by Brytting (1991), profit is often lowered in order to reduce or avoid taxes, and cash flows may thus appear as a better proxy than profitability.



Mahé de Boislandelle (1996) explains that technico-economic performance indicators, such as productivity ratios, may generate an « exaggerating effect » in small firms. Due to the lack of comparison with competitors or the narrowness of the market, the business results may be locally misanalysed. Marchesnay and Fourcade (1997) also explain that when a business, small or large, tries to overpass its competitors, it seeks to increase turnover or return on investment and eventually to improve profitability. According to the authors, these criteria can be discussed when applied in SMEs. For example, the seek for productivity may be contradictory with a competitive advantage based on quality and authenticity of the product (Marchesnay and Fourcade, 1997: 100).

Beyond the use of static indicators of business performance, the integration of their evolution over a given time period may provide a better understanding of performance. Many authors evaluate performance in terms of growth, even though still using classical indicators related to the firm's results (Miner, 1997). Considering sales growth as a proxy for performance, it has been observed that an increased pressure from new customers and a high growth rate in sales may generate problems and prove counter-productive in the end (Brytting, 1991: 192). As an improvement, Delmar and Davidsson (1998) suggest to take into account growth patterns in order to distinguish between absolute and relative growth, erratic or regular evolution...

As argued by Brytting (1991) about organising in small firms, the 'received view' does not capture the small firm behaviour. The author states that "emotional decisions, subjectively perceived complexity, and process perspectives among small firms' managers, demand another set of theoretical concepts and models. A suggested alternative theoretical framework is the social psychological perspective" (Brytting, 1991: 39). The argument can be applied as far as performance indicators are concerned, and thus support the need for a widening to the notion of success, which is expected to better grasp the small firms' owner-managers particularities and allow space for a social psychological perspective.



## The confusion between the business and the owner-manager in small firms

Small firm's owner-managers take not only a financial risk in the business, but also familial and psychological risks. Their commitment and the overlapping of their personal and familial life with the business are not taken into account in the conventional definitions of success. When one considers the relationships that small firms owner-managers have with their business, it appears that success may lie beyond sales, profitability or increase in the number of employees, and should be considered in a more global way. Although in large firms success is measured as the firm's success (*performance*), in small entities, business and personal success of the owner-manager cannot be separated.

The confusion between the owner-manager and the small firm, as far as success and failure are concerned, is expressed in most studies (Brytting, 1991: 159-161, 167). The business is often seen as an extension of the owner-manager, and this confusion arises in most studies. For example, with Carsrud and Olm's article entitled "The success of male and female entrepreneurs : a comparative analysis of the effects of multidimensional achievement motivation and personality traits" (Carsrud and Olm, 1986), it is interesting to observe that success is defined in terms of productivity and market shares, but still referred to as the *entrepreneur's* success.

As stated by Gartner (1993) : "observers have a tendency to underestimate the influence of external factors and overestimate the influence of internal or personal factors when making judgements about the behavior of other individuals". This is particularly relevant as far as failure is concerned, whereas success proves to be most of the time considered as the venture's success, rather than the entrepreneur's success.

It is also interesting to note the underlying discordance that exists within personality research or predictive performance models. Their framework is based on an approach at the *individual's* level, while performance or success are evaluated at the *firm's* level. This duality between individual and firm's levels of analysis may be crucial. The importance of the choice in the unit of analysis is demonstrated by Rosa and Scott (1996) with their study on multiple business owners, which suggests that actual growth may not be visible when observed only at the firm's level. The choice of the individual's level of analysis for the present research is developed in section 4.



### 2.2.3. Incompleteness : the non economic and subjective dimensions of success

In their study, Carsrud and Olm measure success through employee productivity and emphasise that “while the criterion is not an absolute measure of success, it can be viewed as a relative indicator of how 'productive' the individual firms are in relation to others” (Carsrud and Olm, 1986: 153). Yet, even though the authors recognise that “the precision of the indicators of success utilised in the model must be questioned”, their suggestions for further improvement of the research still refer to more complete and complex, but still quantifiable, objective indicators (sales growth, profit margins, return on investment).

These traditional measurement tools may prove very useful in identifying factors of financial performance, building predictive models of performance, enabling the distinction to be precisely made between ‘successful’ firms and non-performing ones (Chell et al. 1991, Daily and Dalton 1992, Hankinson and Gillingham 1995). However, they offer a limited view of the owner-manager’s success, accepted only as financial and economic results of the firm, and thus underestimate the importance of *non economic* elements of success.

Yet little in-depth reflection in that direction has been made, although the need for multidimensional tools or combination of both qualitative and quantitative data has been supported by many authors (Carsrud and Olm 1986, Cooper and Artz 1995, Paradas 1993, Weisz 1987). The combination of quantitative and qualitative elements in order to operationalise and build a composite index to measure performance has been studied by Francfort et al. (1995), who have taken into account four levels of performance : economic, commercial, productive and social, as well as an additional criterion based on the owner-manager's perceptive judgement. The authors also refer to the works of Woodward (1958) and Lawrence and Lorsch (1969), in which some quantitative data are coupled with more qualitative or subjective ones to measure performance. The use of qualitative data as predictors of success has been supported by Storey, Keasey, Watson, and Wynarczyk (1987). However, there are still very few studies where non-financial indicators are used to determine success or failure, and most of them aim at predicting survival rather than measuring success (Cooper et al. 1990 and 1991, Lussier 1995, Reynolds 1987, Reynolds and Miller 1989).



### Heterogeneity of the population

The diversity of small business leaders is observed by many researchers (Gray, 1998). As stated by Delmar (1996: 17): « People start or buy business for different reasons. The group contains everything from small mom and pop stores to future large corporations ». This statement underlines the co-existence of different motivations and potentially varying visions of success among small business owner-managers. The entrepreneur, quasi-entrepreneur, administrator and caretaker were identified as different types of business owners by Chell et al. (1991). The use of multiple measures of performance – both through composite indices of performance or distinctive measures used according to the type of owner-manager studied- should take into account the diversity of small business owner-managers. This trend is reviewed and supported by Daily and Dalton (1992): « Currently, there is no agreement on what constitutes an appropriate set of dependent variables to define corporate performance (Chakravarthy 1986). Also, because it is unlikely that any one indicator could accurately capture performance, several researchers have suggested using multiple indicators of performance (Capon, Hulbert, Farley, and Martin 1988 ; Cochran and Wood 1984 ; Maupin 1987 ; Shortell and Zajac 1988). Begley and Boyd (1986) have recommended using multiple measures to examine small firms in particular. Because small business owner-managers may have different goals, any given performance indicator may provide a biased view. For example, the ‘opportunistic’ entrepreneur is highly growth-oriented, while the ‘craft’ entrepreneur is not (Smith and Miner 1983) » (Daily and Dalton, 1992: 28).

### Influence of entrepreneurial characteristics on visions of success

An illustration of the diversity in the profiles and the related subjectivity of success may be found in the entrepreneurship literature, through the review of the major entrepreneurial traits’ influences on visions of success.

Entrepreneurs have been defined as individuals with a high need for achievement. McClelland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell (1953) have studied the recognition time of individuals to resolve anagrams of simple words with either neutral, low or high achievement meanings. Their results are



clear : “the subjects with very high *n* Achievement rank recognise words like *success*, *mastery*, and *perfect* more quickly ; whereas subjects with moderate *n* Achievement rank are slower than others at seeing words like *unable*, *obstacle*, and *failure*” (McClelland et al., 1953: .259). Although it is specified that these are results of a research in progress, it seems reasonable to infer that the subjects with moderate *n* Achievement are primarily concerned with avoiding failure.

According to McClelland, success slows the achievement motive in the same way as eating slows hunger (McClelland, 1961: 84-85). Miner et al. have demonstrated that task motivation was positively correlated with entrepreneurial performance and particularly growth (Miner et al., 1992 and 1994). It is the prospect of achievement satisfaction, rather than money, that drives entrepreneurs. For them, money is a measure on how well one is doing (Delmar, 1996: 14) rather than an end.

Consequently, the need for achievement may have an influence on entrepreneurs' conceptions of success, as it drives them to achieve, not in a materialistic way, but rather through social recognition, even though money remains an important symbol of success. Entrepreneurs with a high need for achievement may also place their conception of success at a more psychological level, that thus may be more difficult to attain than classical quantifiable objectives of performance. The need for social recognition motivates them to get involved not only in their firms, but also in other « political » activities (associations, professional organisations), that are part of their personal success, beyond professional success.

Although results from studies differ on the correlation between entrepreneurs and risk-taking propensity, it appears that entrepreneurs have a higher tolerance for ambiguity, which means they consider risky situations as challenging rather than stressful. However, this propensity seems to be dependent on various characteristics of the entrepreneur, such as age, experience and motivation. The conception of success may also be related to these factors. It was demonstrated that entrepreneurs with a higher tolerance of ambiguity had a greater confidence that they would succeed (Ray, 1986 and 1994). This concept is closely related to the overoptimism of entrepreneurs, who prove to be most confident about their perceived chances of success (Cooper, Woo and Dunkelberg, 1988).



A higher tolerance of ambiguity may lead entrepreneurs to be in a constant move further ahead, as risk and challenge provide them with other sources of motivation. This may be related to the concept of Type A Behavior Pattern (Friedman and Rosenman, 1974), which defines entrepreneurs as characters being in a constant struggle to achieve more and more in less and less time. Entrepreneurs therefore do not appear as individuals satisfied with a stable situation, but rather as conceiving success through growth and challenge.

Studies have reported that entrepreneurs were more likely to attribute their success and failures to themselves, rather than to external uncontrollable events. In that sense, internal locus of control was conceived as one determinant of the expectancy of success (Weiner, 1992). Entrepreneurs with a high internal locus of control are proud to claim that they owe their success only to themselves. One of their guidelines is to be responsible for one's own failures and success.

The need for independence, desire for keeping control within the firm and avoiding external parties' influences are central elements of entrepreneur's attitudes (Gray, 1998). This is part of Bauer's definition of the owner-manager's political logic (Bauer, 1995). This vision may lead entrepreneurs to search success in terms of keeping and consolidating control within the firm, rather than in terms of growth achievement. In that sense, a strong need for independence may represent a barrier to growth.

Entrepreneurial particularities seem to have an influence on entrepreneurs' way to view and achieve success. The observation of the variations that may occur from an individual to another, as far as the notion of success is concerned, supports the need for a subjective, individualised approach. As mentioned by Stanworth and Gray (1991) when referring to the craftsperson : "Such business owners perform their craft in relation to an internalised set of standards which, along with their artistic abilities, enable them to create things of beauty. Measuring the performance of their businesses in terms of economic indicators may not indicate success" (Stanworth and Gray, 1991: 158). Besides the subjectivity of success, it appears that economic performance cannot be the only measure used, especially in small entities where these craftspersons operate.



## 2.3. BEYOND THE ECONOMIC RATIONALE

More and more studies tend to integrate both economic and social or psychological aspects when studying growth processes in small and entrepreneurial firms. Their findings support the idea of success as a multidimensional concept, encompassing not only economic or professional aspects, but also personal and familial success.

### 2.3.1. Empirical support to the importance of non-economic concerns

According to Adair (1998), the homo economicus model (identification of preferences and maximisation of the decision's results) remains dominant, because it is simple and that no other strong alternative has emerged (Adair, 1998: 15). However, beyond the only economic rationale, Simon's 'bounded rationality' or 'satisficing' decision model takes into account the psychological and cognitive characteristics of the actors, whose levels of aspirations vary over time and circumstances, and who must cope with the constraints induced by their limited internal cognitive abilities (Simon, 1982). This model raises strong criticisms towards the 'homo economicus' paradigm.

Bauer (1995) suggests that owner-managers act according to three 'logics' : the economic one, either patrimonial or entrepreneurial, but also the political logic, which consists in keeping and consolidating power inside the firm, and the familial rationale. The decisions made by owner-managers result of the combination of these rationales. However, they may happen to be contradictory, and Bauer shows that the economic interests do not systematically prevail. As mentioned by Gray (1998) : « Being an entrepreneur is about being skilful and persistent in business which implies having the abilities of a successful modern capitalist (which may not always sit happily with family or social identity or with personal self-concepts) ». The political or familial logics may overcome the economic rationale, even though the economic concern seems to be the only legitimate one in the business community. Bauer argues that the numerous interviews and surveys conducted demonstrate that small firms owner-managers, even for decisions of highest importance, and even though they will not admit it, do follow not only economic rationales, but also



political and familial ones. He strongly criticises the monopoly of the « economic thinking » according to which owner-managers cannot afford admitting the importance of power or family concerns within their decisions for the business. Beyond this socially agreed-upon dominance of the economic side, it appears that subjective, personal concerns should not be under-estimated when studying small firms owner-managers. As an illustration, Anderson and Jack (1999) discuss the importance of 'prestige' as a non rational driver to become a business owner or an entrepreneur.

According to McClelland et al., "Whereas the rat or the child may be primarily governed by variations from sensory or simple perceptual expectations, the adult will be ruled by discrepancies in higher level cognitive structures (beliefs) which may lead to action in direct opposition to simple sensory pleasures and pains", (McClelland et al, 1953: 67). This statement can be related to the notion of ethics : higher concerns may interfere in the decision-making process, beyond simple and obvious choices. Brytting (1991) also discusses the dilemma within small growing firms such as the tension between the category named 'spontaneity' and 'systematic planning'. He refers to Beckérus and Roos (1985: 156-157), who « talk about the 'two-dimensional enterprising' distinguishing between economic explanations and psychological, philosophical and humanistic ones » (in Brytting, 1991: 187).

A study conducted by Duchéneaut (1995) shows that 52 % of small firms' owner-managers feel satisfied with the size of their firm, and that only 46 % wish strongly to develop it even though they had the opportunity to (Duchéneaut, 1995: 487). An earlier Swedish investigation found that almost 40% of the small firm owner/managers said no to growth, even though they perceive necessary market opportunities (SHIO 1986, in Brytting 1991: 26). These findings tend to demonstrate that there are not only objective, technical barriers to growth. The importance of these cannot be denied, however beyond these brakes, there are in most cases subjective reasons for owner-managers to willingly avoid developing their firm.

Bhide (1996) underlines the fact that the entrepreneurs' personality and goals should be taken into account when defining the right growth rate : « Some entrepreneurs thrive on rapid growth; others are uncomfortable with the crises and fire fighting that usually accompany it. One of the limits on a new venture's growth should be the entrepreneur's tolerance to stress and discomfort. » (Bhide, 1996: 127). In an interview to a Chamber of Commerce magazine, a small firm manager explains :



« We are going to further develop the firm, but not beyond a 40-million francs turnover. After that limit, it is too difficult to manage ». He would rather then buy or create another business. « I want to be able to keep on knowing each of my employees' name », he concludes (Pantou, 1997). Brytting (1991) underlines the effect of growth in small firms on the change in the owner-manager / employees relations, turning from genuine, friendly relationships to de-personalised and calculative ones (Brytting, 1991: 197-198). In 1967, Smith already identified this concern in the craftsman entrepreneur's reluctance to grow : "Another reason for not wanting to grow too quickly or too much is related to the feeling that the business is a family. Only in a small company can he know his men and they know him" (Smith, 1967: 27). Other identified reasons are the fear of losing control over the firm, especially as far as banks and unions are concerned, and the feeling that increased profit will be absorbed by taxes and thus create wealth for the government rather than for the entrepreneur himself (Smith, 1967: 27-28).

Other empirical support is provided to the existence of non-economic restraining factors to growth in small firms. In his doctoral dissertation, Davidsson determines three main reasons to explain small firm managers' reluctance to grow : fear of losing control, deterioration in the employees' well-being, and increased vulnerability (Davidsson, 1989: 113). Brytting (1991: 184) adds the difficulty to find or choose new employees who will become new members of the 'family' constituted within the small firm. He also discusses the increased customers pressure experienced by small growing firms and confirms the fear of losing control as restraining forces behind organising in small growing firms (Brytting, 1991: 192).

A more recent study by Wiklund, Davidsson, Delmar and Aronsson (1997) supports these previous findings and demonstrates that expected consequences of growth, either negative or positive ones, as they are perceived by small firms' managers, influence their willingness to expand the firm. The authors conclude that non-economic concerns seem to be more determining for small firms' managers than potential financial benefits when deciding to conduct a strategy of growth. Wiklund (1998) also finds that the « what I want », i.e. motivation of the small business manager, is more important in determining actual outcomes than the « what I know », i.e. personal abilities.



These important research findings suggests that both growth capacity *and* willingness of the owner-manager are essential in decision making processes. Beyond the economic rationale, determinant psychological and social dimensions need to be included.

### 2.3.2. Success as a multidimensional concept

The multidimensional aspect of success is ignored in most previous research. The work by Bauer (1995) has been previously described, which integrates the economic, political and familial rationales of the owner-manager. Mirvis and Hall have introduced the idea of the boundaryless career and psychological success in the individual's career, encompassing not only a job and an organisation, but also work as a spouse, parent, community member, and as a self-developer (Mirvis and Hall, 1994). The authors also express that « In many respects, the boundaryless career will give people the freedom and flexibility to more fully engage in life's work and find, where desired, greater balance in their lives ». It appears clearly that success must be accepted not only as professional satisfaction, but also through familial, social and personal accomplishment. Beyond professional and economic success, which are the most traditionally accepted definitions of success, some researchers have studied other non-economic dimensions of success such as personal development (Pai, 1989).

The accuracy of this issue is strengthened in small firms where personal and familial life, and life at work are very closely connected : working hours, commitment to work, devotion to the firm, impact of negative results on psychology (domestic atmosphere) and personal income, are as many reasons why small firms owner-managers' success can only be grasped within a multidimensional and global approach.

### Professional and personal success

The individual satisfaction, deriving from the small business being a "form of self-expression" is discussed by Brytting (1991: 187), who argues that "small firms might promise unique potentials for individual satisfaction", as far as they have the "potential of allowing people to express their



personalities, ambitions and competencies” (Brytting, 1991: 187). He argues that “small firms are frequent and important, not only because they are economically competitive (they might be in some situations) but also because they offer a possibility of self-expression.” (Brytting, 1991: 191).

Herzberg (1966) distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic sources of satisfaction at work. Extrinsic include wages, hierarchical relationships and organisation. Intrinsic are nature of the tasks, interest in the work, opportunity to improve one’s abilities. These findings were confirmed by the more recent study directed by Riffault (1994) on French values, which also states the growing importance of values associated with personal development over the last ten years. According to Frances (1981) and Riffault (1994), the feeling of freedom and power of decision develops self-esteem, which is a major determinant of work satisfaction.

While success is defined in the present dissertation as an *overall state of satisfaction in professional, familial and personal dimensions*, it is interesting to note in Riffault’s work the significative correlation between work satisfaction and the two other dimensions of satisfaction : global satisfaction in life and satisfaction with regards to the financial situation of the family. Individuals with a high level of work satisfaction also declare that they consider themselves as very happy (50% while the average is 25%) (Riffault, 1994: 104). Work success perception was also identified by Rothberg (1990) as the only work success variable (beyond job title, income level, number of promotions and responsibility changes) as being positively correlated with individuals’ well being, evaluated through life satisfaction and feelings about life. Bruyat (1994) defines success as the combination of both the firm’s performance and the business founder’s individual satisfaction.

These findings on the inter-dependence and correlations between the different dimensions of success or satisfaction act in favour of an approach to study success as a multidimensional concept. The use of a composite index is required in order to grasp all the facets of an individual’s success : economic-professional, but also personal and familial success.



## 2.4. SUCCESS AS A SUBJECTIVE NOTION

Only a few researchers have tried to define a more global concept beyond the classical measures used for performance evaluation and have focused on the individual's vision of success (Motlagh 1995, Poynter 1991, Sadler 1987, Slipowitz 1992, Vega 1996). It is interesting to note that the meaning of 'success' is more often questioned in women -or minorities- studies. It seems that while studying the influence of gender, the issue is raised whether females search or pursue the same desires and goals, and therefore whether their conception of success differs from males' (Slipowitz 1992). Moreover, this concern for women's success may be enhanced by the fact that preconceived measures of success most of the time militate against women (Motlagh 1995). In her study on gender differences in business ownership and success, Vega (1996) argues for the development of a new method for success measurement which is highly qualitative and individualised.

The subjectivity of the notion of success is discussed in the present section through its dependence upon the individual's perceptions and context. The relevance of success as a social construct is also developed.

### 2.4.1. A matter of perceptions

McClelland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell (1953) write : “the conditions for affective arousal involve not actions so much as expectations (or adaptation levels) and *the result of action* in terms of how far they confirm expectations. So to be consistent, motives should be distinguishable primarily in terms of the *types of expectations* involved, and secondarily in terms of the types of action, in so far as they exist, which confirm those expectations in varying degrees and thus yield positive or negative affect”. This statement can apply to success as compared to the notion of performance, as far as results and expectations are concerned. Success may not be a question of the firm's results but rather a question of how the owner-manager perceives these results with respect to his/her expectations.



The duality between objective measures of success and perception of success is investigated. Perception is considered as how the individuals define success, and how they perceive their own success.

The social constructionist approach is described by Pfeffer (1982), who “suggests that people act and then figure out what they've done (offer interpretations to themselves and others). If we ask people for explanations of 'What has happened ?' we will likely get different attributions for these occurrences, based on who was observing the event, and whether the event was viewed as a success or a failure...”. Montagno, Kuratko and Scarcella (1986) have demonstrated that business leaders and bank loan officers had different perceptions of what key success factors are. In the same way, the various stakeholders of a firm may have different conceptions of what success means, and problems may emerge from diverging perceptions and expectations. Marchesnay and Fourcade (1997) observe that growth in SMEs is very often evaluated according to the owner-manager's own objectives. Some small firms owner-managers and their family may consider that growth is sufficient when the income received from the business enables them to earn a reasonable or comfortable living for their family. The shareholders, on the opposite, may judge growth acceptable only when they receive a substantial amount of dividends. This highlights the importance of external parties' and decision-makers' respective visions, with an increased accuracy as the firm size and the number of actors get larger (Marchesnay and Fourcade, 1997: 279). The drawbacks of using preconceived definitions of success is outlined by Motlagh (1995), who condemns in her thesis the use of objective indicators having for consequence to militate against women and minorities.

Mac Lure (1990) uses a double measure of success, combining both objective and perceived aspects of success. Other authors also combine objective and subjective elements to measure success or to compare 'actual' success with 'perceived' success. This type of research is supported by Hankinson : “Many SME owner-managers perceive their business to be 'successful' despite my feeling that they are under-achieving. It is how they view their business performances that counts rather than actuality. One could attempt to measure this 'perceptive business performance' against 'optimised business performance', i.e. a business performance that is reasonably attainable given current circumstances” (Hankinson, correspondence with the author, 1997).



Van Gelderen and Thurik (1997) measure economic and subjective success through self-reported questionnaires. Economic success is measured through turnover, profit, investments since start up, number of employees over six years, personal income over six years. Subjective success is measured through indication of the goals at start up and their degree of achievement, optimism regarding future, and satisfaction questions. Solymossy (1997), in his study on the impact of push and pull motivations on success, evaluates success through economic data and satisfaction-related elements. His findings support the use of multiple measures of success : while push and pull motivation groups of entrepreneurs show no differences in terms of economic success, their motivations have an impact on satisfaction-based measures of success.

Some authors have gone further, combining the study of both the personal definition of success and the perceived achievement of the individuals surveyed. Poynter (1991) studies owner-managers' self definition of success, using questions on the satisfaction of personal goals, the satisfaction of financial goals, personal feelings of the firm being a success, and personal accomplishment with the firm. King (1988) assesses two dimensions to success : the social/objective measure and the personal / subjective experience of what is meaningful to life for the individual.

As far as perceptions are concerned, our perspective is similar to Chagué's (1997), referring to technology as a field of research : "this cognitive approach corresponds to our theoretical framework, as far as it seems rather uneasy to seek an objective and universal measurement tool for technology. It is far more interesting to analyse the way the owner-manager *perceives* technology and thus masters it."

#### 2.4.2. A context-dependent notion

McClelland et al. argued that "behavior is determined by situational (perceptual) factors, by habit (memory) factors, and by motivational factors" (McClelland et al., 1953: 42). James Mac Clelland, an expert scientist specialised in mental activities, underlines the importance of the context in cognitive aspects (Mac Clelland, 1997). Their statements suggest that context must be taken into account when studying behaviour or cognitive processes.



The present research adopts a subjective view of success, based on the assumption that each individual has his/her own conception of success, depending on the socio-cultural environment and profile characteristics. The socio-cultural environment is defined as the perceived context as well as the cultural and socio-economic realities. It integrates the socio-economic context (Recken, 1993), national values and cultural preferences (Hofstede, 1991) as having an influence on each individual's conception of success. At a more personal level, it also includes the owner-manager's familial background and education as probable origins of his/her attitudes and interests. The profile characteristics include entrepreneurial propensity as well as demographics.

### Historical evolutions and socio-economic context

Hofstede suggests that Maslow's needs hierarchy should be expanded : specific needs for respect, harmony, or dignity may be included, which obviously did not have a great importance in Maslow's cultural environment, the American middle class of the 1950s (Hofstede, 1991). Recken (1993) analyses the evolutions in the meaning of 'success' in the United States of America, from the eighteenth century until the 1930s. This study is achieved through the observation of popular writings, magazines such as The Reader's Digest and other sources of popular psychology. According to the author, the American notion of success in the 1930s is highly dependent on the socio-economic context of this period. This may explain why success in the thirties evokes the belonging to a community, while before the economic crisis success typically meant wealth and power. Recken's findings demonstrate that the word 'success' may cover varying notions according to the historic period, the religious, socio-economic environment, and the geographical area.

Figure 2.4. shows that the meaning of 'success' adapts according to the social and economic context of the time period. The mutation of the society demands new paradigms : « By the end of the nineteenth century, however, there no longer seemed to be any relationship between virtue and success. (...) The myth of success, with its emphasis on individual opportunity and independence, thus presented an intellectual framework for censuring the emerging industrial order » (Recken, 1993: 208). The emergence of a new way to define success and happiness is guided by an



increasing uncertainty in people’s lives. Then during the thirties, « The new definition of success also reflected the reduced expectations of Americans during the 1930s. With widespread unemployment, fewer people could realistically aspire, of course, to wealth and power ; consequently the material symbols of success received far less attention » (Recken, 1993: 206). Recken also explains that « (...) the act of rising above others would threaten the security of belonging (...) To secure status for oneself, ironically, one had to insure the status of others as well. The point was clear - if one appeared to surpass one’s friends, one would not be able to fit in or belong » (Recken, 1993: 213-214). Under these circumstances, it seems that visible growth and social recognition were not considered as rewards of success.

**Figure 2.4. - Historical evolutions in the meaning of success in the United States of America**

*Adapted from S. L. Recken (1993)*

	Historical period			
	before 1800	19th century	1900-1930	1930s
What success is	competence, independence, morality	the Mythic American Community	individual opportunity, independence	happiness, humility, spontaneity
	harmony leading to fruitfulness	virtue, spiritual values, family and friends	wealth, Power	belonging, friends respect, security, peace of mind
		self-reliance, independence, ambition		positive mental outlook, others-directed personality
What it is not	competition leading to chaos	material wealth, urban life	virtue	wealth, consumption habits, high status ambition

Recken has gathered some American literature of that period, which provides insights about the conception of success at that time. In a Reader’s Digest article, Pitkin urges readers to be reasonable in their expectations for success. Reduced expectations is also the main theme of the best selling book of 1938, Lin Yutang’s ‘The importance of living’. The author states that ”Humans cannot



have both success and innerpeace”. According to Lin, the three great American vices are efficiency, punctuality and the desire for achievement. This author also regards ambition as « not born of human nature, but of human society ». It appears obvious that ambition is not integrated in Lin’s conception of success in the 1930s America. The ideal « little man » of the 1930s is described by Link (1937) : he is not handsome, has received no college education, is unemployed. He shows unselfish behaviours, is active in his church, and enjoys sports, dancing and card games. This does not sound like the definition of the ideal « little man » in the late twentieth century...

All these observations provide insights into the extent to which the socio-economic environment may influence people’s way to think and act about success.

### Success as a socio-cultural construct

Social representations are generated by both cognitive and social processes (Abrie 1994, Lunt et al. 1998). The social context in which the representation is elaborated or transmitted has a strong influence on the cognitive processes. The co-existence of these two logics provides explanations why social representations integrate both rational and irrational elements (Abrie, 1994: 14). This view is also supported by Michit (1996) : “In this problematic, the subject is considered in its social background and we state that the gap between the perfect rationality and the decisional reality is commanded by a sociality defined by social position and the subsequent structures of social representation” (Michit, 1996: 941). These statements support the hypothesis of non-economic, ‘irrational’ concerns playing an important role in decision-making and social representations. Applied to the notion of success, it is suggested that success integrates both rational and irrational elements and that its representation by individuals (their vision of success) is highly subjective.

Recken (1993) refers to the work of Stuart Chase (1931) on the variation in values and notions of success according to the location and culture. He analysed rural Mexican societies where money and time were not held to be important. The inhabitants thus had sufficient time for leisure activities, friends and family. These observations demonstrate the influence of cultural elements on individuals’ values and related behaviours. As far as visions of success are concerned, Motlagh



(1995) has studied Mexican-American women and the impact of culture on individuals' success definitions. Her research work strongly criticises the limits of preconceived, generalised definitions of success. Hofstede (1991) draws a parallel between his results and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, according to which the need for success and esteem are higher in nations such as the United States of America, where the entrepreneurial spirit has always been dominating to a great extent. Hofstede (1991) has identified discriminant cultural dimensions that may have an impact on success definitions. For example, a high level of hierarchical distance gives much importance to power and its expression through money, social status and strength (Hofstede, 1991: 66). Individualistic values such as privacy of ownership and self accomplishment are also enhanced in individualistic nations. In countries with a low level of risk control, motivation is essentially generated by the need for success, esteem or recognition (Hofstede, 1991: 167). These findings illustrate the influence a nation's cultural context may have on visions of success.

Socio-demographic elements can be synthesised into : age, gender, social class background, marital status, education, ethnicity (Stanworth and Gray, 1991: 170). The influence of the familial background and of role models on entrepreneurial orientation has been studied for long (Collins et al. 1964, Cooper et al. 1994, Gray 1998). According to McClelland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell, data “strongly support the hypothesis that achievement motives develop in cultures and in families where there is an emphasis on the independent development of the individual” (McClelland et al., 1953: 328). The authors also state that “affective changes early in life accompanying doing well or failing to do well in various learning situations provide the basis for motivation to succeed and to avoid failure”, (McClelland et al, 1953: 161). King (1988) also found significant influences of childhood on individuals' concepts of success.

### The gender issue

Within the economic psychology field, most of the studies relevant to our research focus on gender differences and social representations. The gender social identity is defined by social beliefs about gender (beliefs about femininity and masculinity), opinions about respective qualities, stereotypes



according to the traits and skills of men and women, and beliefs about the correct behaviour to be displayed by men and women (Hartman et al, 1988). Echebarria Echabe (1992) demonstrates the existence of a 'masculine social identity syndrome'. This is defined by a cluster of characteristics, within which values that stress the need for achievement in the professional area (Echebarria Echabe, 1992: 9). "It was also said that masculine subjects interiorize to a greater extent values which stress the need for achievement in professional sphere as a life goal... The hypotheses were confirmed overall. Masculine subjects had higher scores on achievement values. Feminine subjects had lower scores on the same values. Masculine and androgynous subjects had more internal locus of control beliefs (both in personal and interpersonal spheres) than feminine subjects" (Echebarria Echabe, 1992: 14-15). The authors conclude that gender categorisation has an influence on identity construction, interiorizing different values systems and developing different cognitive styles (Echebarria Echabe, 1992: 10, 18). Conclusions on gender influences must though be moderated by the proportion of male with a masculine orientation (36.7 %) and of 'feminine' female (31.8 %). "Though it is true that the correlational character of this study does not allow us to test causal relationships, the social distribution of occupations and sex membership nevertheless appear to be related to the Gender Social Identity Syndrome. We believe that categorization based on sex has a deep influence in constructing our identities" (Echebarria Echabe, 1992: 18). This study provides an illustration of the influence of social factors and suggests that male and female interiorize different values systems. It can thus be investigated whether they have specific visions of success and how these differ.

Even though some studies question the relevance of a differentiation between male and female entrepreneurs as far as management methods are concerned (Birley, 1989 ; Chaganti, 1986 ; Vega, 1996), it is argued that values systems and attitudes towards business and life in general may vary between men and women. According to the social feminist theory, women have different opinions about doing business than men (Voerman, 1997). It seems that gender does not directly make the difference, but rather that the socio-cultural environment and the individual's background condition men and women's attitudes and values systems (Scherer, Brodzinski & Wiebe, 1990). Many studies consequently deal with 'masculinity' and 'femininity' variables rather than gender, even though the correlation between gender social identity and actual gender remains high (Echebarria Echabe,



1992). The masculinity / femininity dimension in national cultures was studied by Hofstede (1991). He compares his results with Mc Clelland's work on motivation, which identified three types of motivation : the need for success, the need for (peer) recognition and the need for power (Hofstede, 1991: 163). Through comparison of the findings, Hofstede finds a high correlation between high need for success, low risk control and high degree of masculinity (Hofstede, 1991: 164). Masculine societies praise material success, money and strength. Failures are rejected ; public success is the main achievement source in these types of cultures (Hofstede, 1991: 139). This can be compared with Echebarria Echabe's (1992) findings on gender social identity that suggests that male and female interiorize different values systems.

Loscocco et al (1991) state that among 540 successful small businesses in New England, female-owned businesses have lower sales volumes and produce lower incomes than male-owned businesses. The smaller size of women's businesses is the major explanatory factor, followed by women's lack of experience and concentration in less profitable industries. However, another source of understanding may lie in the fact that women have different vision of success than male, and thus achieve success in other ways than measured through firm's performance.

Beyond the business sphere, Herrmann (1988), in his studies on brain structures, identifies type 'C-only' individuals, who are mostly females, and for whom : « Personal satisfaction is the main measure of success for everything » (Herrmann, 1988: 99). Slipowitz (1992) has also emphasised the fact that women had a different understanding of success, expressing it more with words such as happiness, satisfaction and personal growth rather than money, fame or prestige. Besides, she explains how women may experience conflict between success at work and success in relationships. Cooper and Artz (1995) found that female entrepreneurs were more satisfied with business ownership.

It is thus expected that male and female respondents have different visions of success, and that females give higher importance to the familial and personal dimensions of success. They are also expected to report higher levels of satisfaction.



## 2.5. SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The literature review highlights the limits of traditional indicators of performance, which lack coherence and generate findings with a limited scope. Their lack of appropriateness, as far as small firms are studied, is also underlined. The commitment of the owner-manager to the firm, as well as the overlapping of professional and personal spheres, suggest both an extended definition of success and a shift from the *firm's* performance measurement to the evaluation of the *individual's* success.

Strong support is given to the importance of non-economic concerns, supporting the need to study success as a multifaceted, multidimensional concept, beyond just the economic rationale. A composite index for success, encompassing not only professional, but also personal and familial dimensions, is suggested.

The heterogeneity of small firms owner-managers' population and the underlying diversity of their motivations and expectations are studied. These observations, combined with literature on success, confirm the need to view success as a subjective notion, analysed at the individual's level.

Success is also considered as a matter of perceptions, both on what success means, and on whether success is achieved. The influence of the cultural and socio-economic context on the individuals' very definition of success is observed. It appears that gender also has an impact on values systems and success definitions. Male seem to be oriented towards professional achievement while female express success in more personal terms.

Finally, the issue of success as a social construct is addressed, suggesting the influence of socio-economic and ideological determinants on the social representation of success.

Previous literature supports the relevance of a multidimensional, subjective and individualised approach of success as an area for investigation beyond traditional measures of business performance.



### **3. PRELIMINARY STUDY : SMALL FIRMS OWNER-MANAGERS' VISIONS OF SUCCESS**

#### **3.1. METHODS DESIGN**

#### **3.2. FINDINGS**

##### **3.2.1. Contents of the interviews**

##### **3.2.2. Ranking scale results**

#### **3.3. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS**



This preliminary study is distinct from the main survey. It aims at providing insights on small firms owner-managers' visions of success in an exploratory way and on an empirical basis. The objective is to combine these findings with the literature review conclusions in order to generate ideas and creative insights, and to elaborate the framework for further steps of the research. These are the reasons why it is the subject of a distinct section, integrated between the literature review conclusions and the conceptual framework elaboration. This preliminary study should be seen as an intermediary step within the whole research process.

For this purpose, an exploratory approach is adopted, with a wide sample selection and an informal interview design, in order to get as many spontaneous statements on success as possible. The present section is an overview of this study, conducted through interviews with seventeen owner-managers. The methods are described, as well as the main findings with a high relevance to the present research. A confrontation of the findings with the literature review conclusions closes the section.

### 3.1. METHODS DESIGN

French small firm owner-managers are reluctant to dedicate time to research. Firstly, they do not have much time for anything they consider not being part of their business sphere. Secondly, they generally feel suspicious about academics, their own level of education being often low and the French academic community being perceived as rather disconnected with business realities and constraints. In that cultural context, interviews are difficult to obtain and the content of these may be biased by the atmosphere which does not favour collaboration, confidence and honesty. The interviews conducted for the present doctoral research were thus realised with owner-managers who had already been met and had some knowledge of the researcher's concerns and interests. This improved the interviewing process quality and the relevance of the findings, but may have introduced some unintended biases. This potential problem has been borne in mind during the interpretation of the interviews.



### Interviews design

Seventeen small firms owner-managers were interviewed. Three of them were women. The interviews were conducted on a face to face, semi-directed basis. They were tape-recorded with the agreement of all the owner-managers interviewed. These were also aware that they could at any time ask to stop the recording or erase some records. The atmosphere was informal, of a discussion type rather than a questioning. Interviewees were invited to react and give their comments whenever they wished.

The first discussion issue dealt with the firm and the owner-managers' professional background, as it is assumed that owner-managers like to talk about their business and feel more confident starting to talk of non personal matters. Once the discussion engaged, they were more likely to express their feelings about life, expectations, and more globally to provide statements on their visions of success.

### The ranking scale

A list of items hypothesised to indicate success had previously been constructed in an intuitive way. Interviewees were asked to complement the list when they thought of other, non-mentioned items, acting thus as a pilot group for the final list of constitutive elements of success used in the questionnaire (see section 5). Professional- and personal-related items were purposely mixed within the list, in order to determine whether this combination would surprise the owner-manager. Their absence of reaction would else support the need for a global, composite index for success evaluation.

The interviewees were asked to grade the various items according to their importance in indicating success. The ranking scale was presented at the end of the interviews, at a time when all the items had been previously discussed, which made their completion easier for the owner-managers and ensured an improved understanding. The owner-managers were asked to comment their answers orally, in order to make sure that they correctly understood the meanings of the indicators suggested. The ranking scale is presented in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1. - Ranking scale – Success indicators**

Among these elements, which ones do best symbolise success according to you ? Grade them from 1 = of no importance, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = important, to 4 = very important.

Success Indicators	1	2	3	4
global satisfaction at work				
high turnover				
job creation				
export activity				
good profitability				
stable and well-balanced family life				
leisure time available for friends or sports				
keeping the control of the business rather than grow				
growing number of employees, development				
customers' satisfaction				
quality (certification)				
social status				
recent equipments, innovative processes				
technology, innovation				
independence				
power				
high earnings				
meeting initial goals				
contributing to national or regional economy				
personal achievement, accomplishment				
possible absence, away of the firm for a few weeks				
"normal" workload, i.e. 5 days a week, 8-9 hours a day				
market shares, leadership on the market				



## Presentation of the interviewees

The owner-managers interviewed are selected in the same regional area (Bretagne). This limitation reduces the biases that may be induced by situational and contextual factors including infrastructure or regional dynamism, which may have an influence on new firm formation (Mason, 1991) and on the owner-manager's intentions (Stanworth and Gray, 1991: 170). The seventeen owner-managers and small firms surveyed are presented in Figure 3.2. The sample conditions : number of employees, length of service, percentage of capitalshare hold and the origin of capital are mentioned. It is also indicated when the owner-manager is a female. The diversity of the owner-managers interviewed aims at stimulating the emergence of a variety of insights, which is the main purpose of this preliminary study.

Figure 3.2. - Presentation of the owner-managers interviewed and their firms

<i>Activity, sector of operations</i>	<i>Number of employees</i>	<i>Degree of ownership</i>	<i>Length of service (years)</i>	<i>Origin of capital</i>
real estate	37	62 %	20	C
accessories for the automobile industry	30	100 %	25	F
market studies and consultancy agency	9	49 %	12	C
communications and advertising agency	60	--	26	C
electronics	52	90 %	14	C
paper industry	48	97 %	17	C
road transport	45	99 %		A
water and gas installations	23	100 %	9	C
tomatoes raising and trade	--	--	12	F & C
feminine ready-to-wear *	18	100 %	10	C & A
agricultural material trade	16	100 %	5	C
fabrication of breeding material	32	92 %	22	F
industrial pastries fabrication *	44	60 %	5	A
furniture retail trade *	7	100 %	15	F & C
automobile franchisee	33	100 %	8	F
hotel and restaurant business	14	13 %	8	C
road transport	77	100 %	32	C

\* female owner-manager

C = creation - F = family transmission - A = acquisition



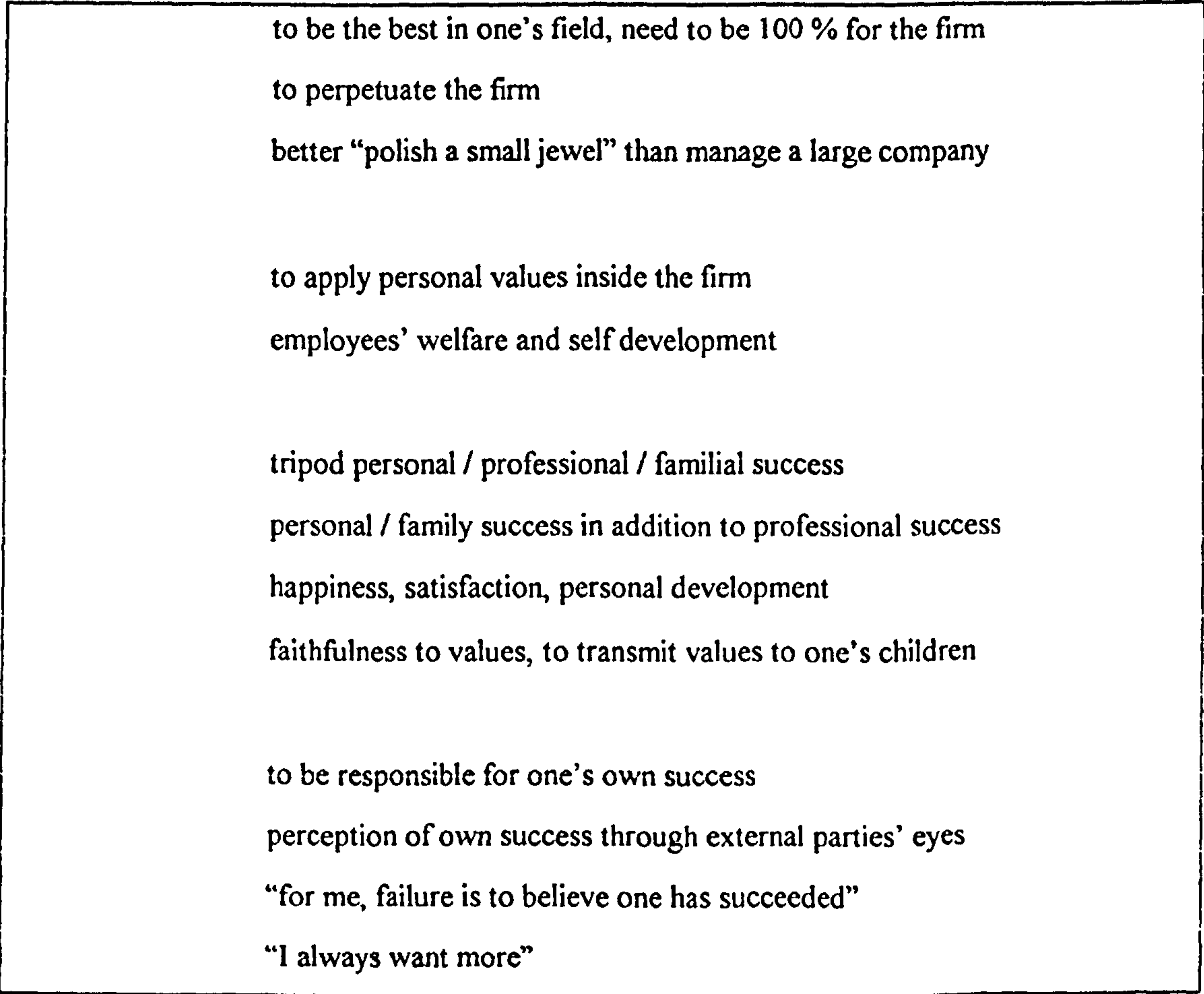
3.2. FINDINGS

The interviews have been analysed through the transcription of the recorded contents, and the ranking scale results, in order to provide qualitative insights rather than generalisable results.

3.2.1. Contents of the interviews

Being an owner manager is more than just making money out of the business. Beyond the economic goals, small business owner managers have more personal goals and aspirations towards satisfaction and happiness. In order to gather these aspirations, the interviewees were asked to narrate themselves and express freely their vision of success. No specific direction was given, so that the interview could generate new ideas for further research. Selected statements are presented in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3. - Owner-manager’s selected statements on success





Economic grounded and more personal, affective statements alternate in the interviewee's expressions of success. They all give a subjective view of success through various statements that can be gathered into different categories.

As expected, professional concerns related to the business have been explicitly mentioned. However, it is interesting to observe that globally, spontaneous statements on success reflect a philosophy of life, rather than specific concerns such as economic performance of the firm. Of course, all interviewees agree to admit that firm's results are crucial. It is only when the business performs well, that the importance of other sides of success appear.

At the cross-road between business-related and more ideological concerns, the application of personal values within the firm, specifically towards employees' well being, is mentioned. The importance of values appears not only in professional, but also familial and personal spheres.

One of the interviewees synthesised this multiple faceted concern by "the necessary balance within the professional / familial / personal success tripod". The examination of the indicators of success given by the interviewees confirms the validity of this classification of success into three dimensions. The multidimensional approach of success is supported by this finding, the overlapping of the dimensions also suggesting that a composite index be used (which is developed in section 5).

The need for independence appears through the statement "to be responsible for one's own success". However, some interviewees also admit that success is recognised through external judgements. One of the owner-manager had never thought of being successful until a colleague told him he was. The statement "for me, failure is to believe one has succeeded" reflects the reluctance for owner-managers to declare themselves successful. This may be explained by the cultural and socio-economic climate in France that prevents from exhibiting one's own success.

The way each owner-manager conceives success and accomplishment is very personal. One of the small business leaders interviewed said that he respected each individual's way to reach self achievement. He even declared that he would be satisfied with his children's working as public employees, if only they were happy with it. This stands as a remarkable lesson of tolerance.

It is interesting to note that one of the interviewees expressed a preference for 'polishing a small jewel' rather than managing a large company. This concern for keeping the firm size low sounds as an echo to many studies that suggest that some small firms owner-managers are reluctant to grow,



for various non-economic reasons (Brytting 1991, Davidsson 1989, Gray 1998, Wiklund 1998, Wiklund et al. 1997). The desire for independence and the fear of losing control are some of the factors that may explain this reluctance. The words used to express this feeling, 'polishing a small jewel', suggest that non economic concerns are predominant in the interviewee's concern not to develop the firm.

The initial objective, to raise insights on small firms owner-manager's conceptions of success, is reached with this list of statements, which stimulates the research and provides elements for the questionnaire design.

### 3.2.2. Ranking scale results

The first observation is that owner-managers were not destabilised by the mixing of professional and more private items in the list presented. This is however not surprising when one considers that the spontaneous statements given on success already integrated and mixed professional, familial and personal elements.

In order to analyse the results, an index was calculated to represent the average score of each item. The items are ordered according to their average score in Figure 3.4. Indices for male and female respondents are also presented. The purpose of these indices is not to conduct statistical analyses, but rather to provide numerical tools to analyse the results.

In the top five elements, four items are individual-oriented : personal accomplishment, global satisfaction at work, stable and well-balanced family life and independence. Only one, customers' satisfaction, is directly related to the business activity. However, the preceding interviews and discussions sometimes belied these rankings. There is a strong paradox between the importance assessed to an item and actual efforts or time dedicated to it. It represents the gap between intentions and achievement, what does not mean that the interviewees' replies are not honest.

Globally, the scores indicate a strong concern for welfare and satisfaction, the way to achieve this being through hard work and dedication to their company.



**Figure 3.4. - Success Indicators : average score, female and male indices**

Success Indicators	Average	Female	Male
customers' satisfaction	3.8	4.0	3.8
personal achievement, accomplishment	3.7	3.7	3.7
global satisfaction at work	3.6	3.3	3.7
independence	3.6	3.7	3.6
stable and well-balanced family life	3.6	3.3	3.7
quality (including or not ISO certification)	3.4	3.7	3.4
good profitability	3.3	3.0	3.4
meeting initial goals	3.3	4.0	3.2
contributing to national or regional economy	3.0	2.3	3.2
technology, innovation	2.9	2.7	2.9
leisure time available for friends or sports	2.9	3.0	2.8
recent equipments, innovative processes	2.7	2.0	2.9

Success Indicators	Average	Female	Male
growing number of employees, development	2.7	2.5	2.7
keep the control rather than develop the firm	2.7	4.0	2.5
market shares, leadership on the market	2.7	3.3	2.5
job creation	2.6	2.7	2.6
social status	2.6	2.3	2.7
high remuneration	2.5	3.0	2.4
power	2.5	3.0	2.4
possible absence from the firm for a few weeks	2.3	2.0	2.3
normal workload i.e. 5 days a week, 8-9 hours a day	1.9	2.5	1.8
export activity	1.8	2.0	1.7
high turnover	1.7	2.0	1.6



There are no striking differences between male and female respondents. Customers' satisfaction and personal achievement are equally ranked high by both men and women. Surprisingly enough, there is also no relevant distinction between women and men regarding available leisure time or family life as elements of success. Yet, women managers tend to pay more attention to a normal workload, which may reveal their concern for a life beyond the business. Despite this trend, it is interesting to note that female respondents conducted the interviews in a slightly more business-oriented way than males. This attitude may be explained by a need to gain legitimacy in a men's world. Their replies to the ranking scale questionnaire illustrate this tendency with somewhat higher ranks for some business-oriented items. While supporting stability in the number of employees and revealing a fear to lose control within the firm, female interviewees also report a high concern for the leadership of the firm on the market. During the interviews, they expressed an orientation for qualitative rather than quantitative growth : increase in market shares rather than in number of employees.

Beyond these gender variations, the main finding of the interviews is that each owner-manager has his/her own conception of success. This may for example explain why some individuals consider flourishing family life as a priority, while others privilege professional career. Some owner-managers seek growth at any condition, whereas others consider a small, stable firm as successful and a source of satisfaction. These observations support existing literature conclusions presented in section 2 : « Because small business owner-managers may have different goals, any given performance indicator may provide a biased view. For example, the 'opportunistic' entrepreneur is highly growth-oriented, while the 'craft' entrepreneur is not » (Smith and Miner 1983).



### 3.3. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

The preliminary findings support the literature review conclusions. They support the subjective approach of the notion of success, suggesting that each owner-manager has his/her own vision of success. The observations also suggest that non economic concerns take an important part in decision making about the firm. The multidimensional aspect of success is confirmed, and the relevant dimensions are suggested with the spontaneous mention of professional, familial and personal elements in the interviewees' global success. This suggests that success is seen as a global concept, beyond just the business performance. The owner-managers' lack of surprise when discovering both professional and personal indicators of success mixed in the ranking scale confirms this state of mind.

The preliminary findings provide interesting insights on the success indicators that need to be integrated in the questionnaire design and they suggest that these indicators should be gathered into three dimensions : professional, personal and familial success. The aim is attained to generate new insights on small firms' owner-managers' visions of success that can then be tested further on a wider empirical basis. These findings, combined with the literature review conclusions, contribute to the elaboration of the conceptual framework, the generation of research questions and hypotheses, and the design of the questionnaire.



#### **4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - DEFINITIONS**

4.1. LEXICAL INSIGHTS

4.2. DISCUSSION ON THE NOTIONS OF GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE

4.3. DEFINITION OF SUCCESS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4.4. SATISFACTION, ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

4.5. SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS



Gartner (1993) underlines the importance of the words used. It however appears in the existing literature that success, performance and growth, are notions frequently used for each other. As stated by Wiklund (1998) "It may be intuitively appealing to equate small firm growth with small firm performance. However, growing firms are not necessarily successful in other respects, and successful small firms do not necessarily grow" (Wiklund, 1998: 3). Wiklund also mentions the lack of conceptualisation of the two words and their interchangeability in empirical research (Wiklund, 1998: 19). While growth and performance are though commonly used notions, 'success' appears as a stand-on-its-own concept. It is rather used as an alternative term for growth or performance, with little distinction made. Its own identity and meaning are therefore ignored.

The present section aims at clarifying the definitions of success, performance and growth. A reflection is conducted on the relationships between these three notions and the levels of analysis they refer to.

Similarly, a reflection is also conducted on the links between satisfaction, achievement and success and the definitions used for these terms in the present dissertation. Related issues and tentative measurement methods are also suggested according to these developments.

#### 4.1. LEXICAL INSIGHTS

As demonstrated by Recken (1993), the meaning of 'success' may vary over time, according to the socio-economic and cultural context. This versatility, combined with the necessary clarification the concepts that are used in the research, support the need for a reflection on growth, performance and success definitions. In order to start investigating these concepts, it may provide fruitful insights to return to the origin and essence of the words and meanings.

The definitions found in dictionaries should not dictate how researchers use concepts in research, and the need for a conceptual contribution rather arises from differences in usage by different researchers at different times (section 2.2.1.). Still, the lexical analysis provides interesting insights on growth, performance and success. It suggests that these are distinct notions, encompassing varying elements.



According to the « Webster's Third new International Dictionary » (Merriam and Webster Inc., 1986), success is defined as the « *degree or measure of attaining a desired end : kind of fortune... succeeding fully or in accordance with one's desires : favorable termination of a venture... the attainment of wealth, position, esteem, favor, or eminence* ». The main concept associated with this definition of success is related to the individual's desires and their attainment. In the same dictionary, the verb « to succeed » is defined as : « *to turn out well : result favourably according to plans or desires... to attain a desired object or end : accomplish what is attempted or intended : be successful... to attain or be in a thriving, prosperous, or popular state.* »

In this definition, eminence, favour, and esteem are mentioned as important elements of success. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, esteem and self-actualisation needs are located in the upper levels of needs. One way to achieve recognition and appreciation, and the need to realise one's full potential, is through social status as a popular and wealthy state. This may thus be considered as part of one's success.

The notion of success seems to be related to desires and goals setting. However, the Webster's definition provides no explicit mention that efforts or devotion are needed to achieve success. Furthermore, this definition suggests that success may be defined both as a result or a process. Success sometimes just occurs, either through difficulties and achievement, or by chance, a "kind of fortune". Some studies involved in the conceptualisation of success also tend to examine success as a process versus success as a product (Dietz 1991, Parilis 1995). One of the first findings of this brief analysis is thus that the notion of process may not be included in success when viewed as a state, or a result. In other words, success may exist independently of growth, evolution or development. Furthermore, growth may not be the ultimate objective traditionally highlighted in entrepreneurial studies : after evoking the evidence from the literature on growth that "small firms typically do not grow", Rosa and Scott (1996) explain that "Ecologically, competitive forces tend to optimise the size of firms, so that an efficient optimal size might well be small, given the nature of the niche being exploited and sector specific forces in play" (Rosa and Scott, 1996: 3).



The notion of growth is also worth a clarification. In the Webster, growth is defined as : « *a progressive development from lower or simpler to higher or more complex forms of organisation : evolution... qualitative or quantitative increase : expansion* ». The definition of growth as a process is not explicitly related to the notion of success. As defined in the Webster, to grow is : « *to pass by degrees into a state or condition : develop by degrees... to increase in any way : expand, gain* ». Similarly to the definitions related to success, the notion of merit is not included. Though, both success and growth definitions integrate positive elements, either through the mention of a 'favourable result' or an 'increase'.

Surprisingly enough, this is not so much the case for the definition of performance. The common use of this notion as a synonym for growth or success may thus -in conformity with the strict definition- be abusive. The Webster's Dictionary defines performance as : « *the act or process of carrying out something : the execution of an action* », with no precision on the positive outcomes of this action. Performance is first defined as « *to bring to a finished state : complete* ». However, it should be noted that 'to succeed' is generally not equated with 'to perform' but rather with 'to perform well'. Further in the definition, performance is however referred to as : « *the ability to perform : capacity to achieve a desired result : efficiency* », what introduces more positive elements. This definition of performance as a completion or an ability suggests the notion of an effort to make.

As a conclusion, the dictionary definitions of success, growth and performance reveal distinct notions that can be classified through three distinctive elements : the mention of required efforts, of a process, and of positive elements, as presented in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1. - Synthetical chart of the lexical analysis**

	Required efforts	Process	Positive outcome or state
Growth	N	Y	N/Y
Performance	Y	N/Y	N/Y
Success	N	N/Y	Y

N = not necessarily, Y = notion integrated in the definition

It is interesting to note that growth is by definition a process and not necessarily related to success. This can be related to Gartner and Markman’s study on the Inc. 500 fast growth companies suggesting that sales growth is no significant determinator for profits. The authors conclude that growth does not mean performance or success and that these notions should thus not be confused with one another (Gartner and Markman, 1999).

The traditional understanding of success involves the notion of required effort. This may be due to Judeo-Christian cultures and moral principles of hard work and dedication. Recken (1993) describes the influence of religion in the United States’ early century, with reference to the Puritan covenant theory : « Goodness merged with success and sin with failure » (Recken, 1993: 207). However, according to the present analysis, success may be reached with no specific efforts or process. This concern may reflect a new trend : young people seek a new kind of success, that would not necessarily imply hard work and difficulties to overpass (see section 1.1).

The dictionary definitions provide interesting insights that support the distinct use of the notions of growth, performance and success. These notions can now be defined more clearly and their inter-relationships be described in a conceptual framework. Growth and performance are first studied, as notions located at the firm’s level, while the reflection then moves towards the individual’s level of analysis with success.



## 4.2. DISCUSSION ON THE NOTIONS OF GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE

As stated by Delmar (1996) “venture performance has been mainly measured as (a) the ability to run the business effectively, and (b) the ability to expand it” (Delmar, 1996: 20). The firm’s results and related growth are the two measurement tools used to evaluate a firm’s performance.

Whatever the method used to measure growth, it remains a quantifiable notion, assessed through business-related data. The evaluation may be achieved through sales, employment, profitability or export growth. When interpreting these figures, attention should be paid to the type of growth achieved. The numerous examples of small firms going bankrupt while sustaining high growth sales remind observers that growth may not mean success. Delmar and Davidsson (1998) point out that growth patterns must be taken into account : growth may be measured through sales or number of employees, it may be organic or acquired, absolute or relative, and may vary over time. Growth may thus be defined as a measurement means for business performance, used to analyse its evolution over time in terms of economic and financial results.

Even though growth would therefore logically be analysed at the firm’s level, Rosa and Scott (1996) highlight the drawbacks of such an approach when studying recidivist entrepreneurs : “Growth potential is thus not the province of firms, but of entrepreneurs who create and run them [...] If the decision is to organise the same products or services into more than one legally independent organisational units, the performance would be the same (yet) largely undetectable to conventional analyses where the unit of analysis is focused on the firm rather than the entrepreneur” (Rosa and Scott, 1996: 3). In that case, only the growth of one specific firm can be evaluated, and global external growth through acquisitions or multiple creation remains invisible. One can then talk of high- or poor growth firms, but certainly not of high- or poor growth achievers, especially as far as growth may not be the owner-managers’ personal aim. Davidsson and Wiklund (1998) explore the relevance and suitability of the different units of analysis for growth (individual, activity, governance structure) according to their users and the theoretical perspectives selected : “The choice of unit of analysis is also a matter of what theoretical perspective is applied. ... The motivation perspective clearly points at using the individual as the unit of analysis, while we reason that the resource-based perspective goes well with using the activity as the unit of analysis” (Davidsson and



Wiklund, 1998: 22). These statements open the road to new analyses of growth processes, but also of success. As growth, success is more a notion related to the individual owner-manager than to the single firm, and as such, it cannot be grasped through the sole firm's results. As far as the owner-manager or the entrepreneur is concerned, the unit of analysis must shift from the firm to its leader.

Another limit to the strict comprehension of growth as a quantified proxy for firm's performance is the subjectivity integrated in the growth process. As described by several researchers (Bauer 1995, Davidsson 1989, Gray 1998, Wiklund et al. 1997), some important non-economic concerns must be taken into account when studying small firms owner-managers and growth processes. Previous literature supports the need, for actual growth achievement, for a real willingness of the manager to develop the firm, beyond the ability to do so (Wiklund, 1998). When growth is studied as a process, non-quantifiable concerns must thus be taken into account at the individual's level.

As a conclusion, growth may be studied as a result or as a process. When considered as a result, growth is a measurement means for firm's performance. When studied as a process, growth is the combination of both the ability to grow and the willingness to grow, linking thus firm's and owner-manager's levels of analysis for an improved understanding. However, either as a process or a result, growth always refer to the *business* growth. The owner-manager is an actor of growth, but s/he is not integrated in its measurement.

Performance is defined as the mirror of the firm doing well -or not, in terms of its financial and economic results. It may be measured through linear data (profitability, return on investment), evolution figures (growth achievement) or survival (or continued entrepreneurship). As observed for growth, the performance process may gain understanding when considered both at the firm's and individual's level -many researchers aim at linking business performance and owner-manager's profile and characteristics. However, performance is only measured at the firm's level ; it thus represents the performance of the business, not the performance of individual managers.

Owner-manager's and firm's performance, however, cannot easily be empirically dissociated in small firms, thus researchers and observers may yield to the temptation to assimilate both levels (see section 2.2.2). However, in a strict definition of growth or performance, this confusion should be avoided.



Growth and performance prove very useful in studying firms and their economic and financial results. Boundary conditions should however be clearly defined as a primary condition for the relevance of the findings. The fields of investigation should be specified, and an extension of the results to areas they do not refer to appears to be inconsistent. As growth and performance are evaluated through business data, they thus refer to the firm rather than to the individual running it.

#### 4.3. DEFINITION OF SUCCESS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Rosa and Scott (1996) highlight the importance of the unit of analysis, providing empirical evidence that the entrepreneur is the most appropriate unit of analysis to study growth. In a similar trend, Johannisson and Robertson (1997) propose that entrepreneurship can only be understood in perspective of the entrepreneur's overall business career, therefore supporting the individual perspective. Davidsson and Wiklund (1998) suggest that the choice of unit of analysis depends on the theoretical perspective selected. The appropriateness of the individual as the level of analysis for cause maps is supported by Weick and Bougon (1986) in their study of organisations as cognitive maps. It appears that the unit of analysis must be cautiously chosen in concordance with the approach used. According to the subjective perspective selected and the previous discussion, it is concluded that the individual is the most appropriate level of analysis for the present study.

Beyond the firm's economic performance, which is the most commonly accepted focus for success studies, some researchers have studied other individual-related and non-economic dimensions of success such as personal development (Pai, 1989) or satisfaction at work (Pleitner, 1983). The individual satisfaction, deriving from the small business being a « form of self-expression » is discussed by Brytting (1991). Mirvis and Hall have introduced the idea of boundaryless career that « will give people the freedom and flexibility to more fully engage in life's work and find, where desired, greater balance in their lives » (Mirvis & Hall, 1994: 365). It appears that success needs to be achieved not only professionally, but also within familial and personal dimensions. These conclusions from the literature are supported by the findings of the preliminary interviews (see section 3). The interviewees were asked to express their visions of success. It came out that their



understandings of success were very heterogeneous, supporting the idea that success is a subjective construct that should be studied at the individual's level. It was also observed that success was not only linked to the business, but could take various forms. The firm's growth and performance are only part of the professional side of success. Three dimensions were hypothesised to grasp the various aspects of the owner-managers' success : personal success, referring to the owner-manager's personal life, achievement and happiness as an individual ; professional success, meaning the success experienced as a small firm owner manager, including the firm's performance and growth ; and familial dimension of success, achieved as a parent and a spouse.

The method used by Davidsson and Wiklund (1998) inspires Figure 4.2. which summarises the elements discussed in the literature review and in the present discussion on the notions of growth, performance and success. It also describes the conceptual framework used for the present research.

Figure 4.2. – Level of analysis, measurement and focus of growth, performance and success notions

	Level of analysis	Measurement	Focus
Growth	Firm / Individual	Objective data (firm), e.g. sales growth  Objective data (individual), e.g. multiple business ownership  Subjective data (individual), e.g. growth willingness	Professional dimension
Performance	Firm	Objective data (firm), e.g. profitability	Professional dimension
Success	Individual	Subjective data (individual), e.g. level of satisfaction	Professional dimension  Familial dimension  Personal dimension



As discussed previously, both growth and performance refer to the firm and are used in the professional sphere, even when the level of analysis is the individual. Their focus is thus placed in the professional dimension. Success is defined as a more global construct, that encompasses three dimensions and should be studied at the individual's level.

Derived from both previous research and the findings of the interviews, Figure 4.3. illustrates the inter-relationships between success, performance and growth.

Figure 4.3. - Success, performance and growth inter-relationships



In this framework, the dotted lines represent the moving boundaries between each dimension. These may overlap each other. In family firms for example, the overlapping is enhanced, as the owner-managers' various roles as a business leader, a family member and an individual are very closely connected. The three dimensions need to be all integrated when studying the owner-manager's success. Most studies trying to make a distinction between various dimensions of success distinguish between work and family success. The first drawback of such an approach is to separate both dimensions, omitting thus their potential overlap. It also ignores the important personal aspect of the individual, who may experience success neither as an owner-manager nor as a spouse or parent but as an individual. Success in these studies is thus studied in an incomplete, limited way. All these observations underline the need for a composite index to evaluate success. The benefits of



such a tool are to integrate all three dimensions of success and to take into account their overlapping, as they are combined within the index rather than studied separately. The components included by the individual in his/her own definition of professional, familial and personal success need to be identified. The relative importance of each dimension of success to the individual also needs to be assessed. Once the individual's conception of success determined that way, it may be coupled with self-reported levels of perceived achievement, in order to build an index for global success and determine whether the individual may be considered as successful, *according to his/her own criteria* –thus respecting the subjectivity of success. The evaluation method elaborated for the present dissertation is developed in section 5.

In the present research, success is defined as a subjective construct : each individual has his/her own conception of success. This vision is conditioned by both psychological and social factors, influencing the meaning of success. Performance and growth represent the quantifiable reality of the firm's results. In that sense, they are part of the professional dimension of success. Performance and growth are evaluated at the firm's level, while the unit of analysis for success is the individual, i.e. in the present case the small firm's owner-manager. Success as a subjective concept cannot be easily operationalised. The benefits of quantifiable, objective measurement tools for research purposes are obvious. Performance and growth are useful for given types of analyses and studies, but can more globally be considered as elements of the owner-manager's professional success. The aim of this framework is thus not to replace traditional performance measures by a broader concept of success, but to clarify different notions and specify their use for different purposes, at different levels of analysis.

#### 4.4. SATISFACTION, ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

According to Cooper and Artz, “overall satisfaction is clearly a fundamental measure of success for the individual entrepreneur” (Cooper and Artz, 1995: 440). The present section investigates the relationships between goals, perceived achievement, satisfaction and success, with major insights from the discrepancy theory.

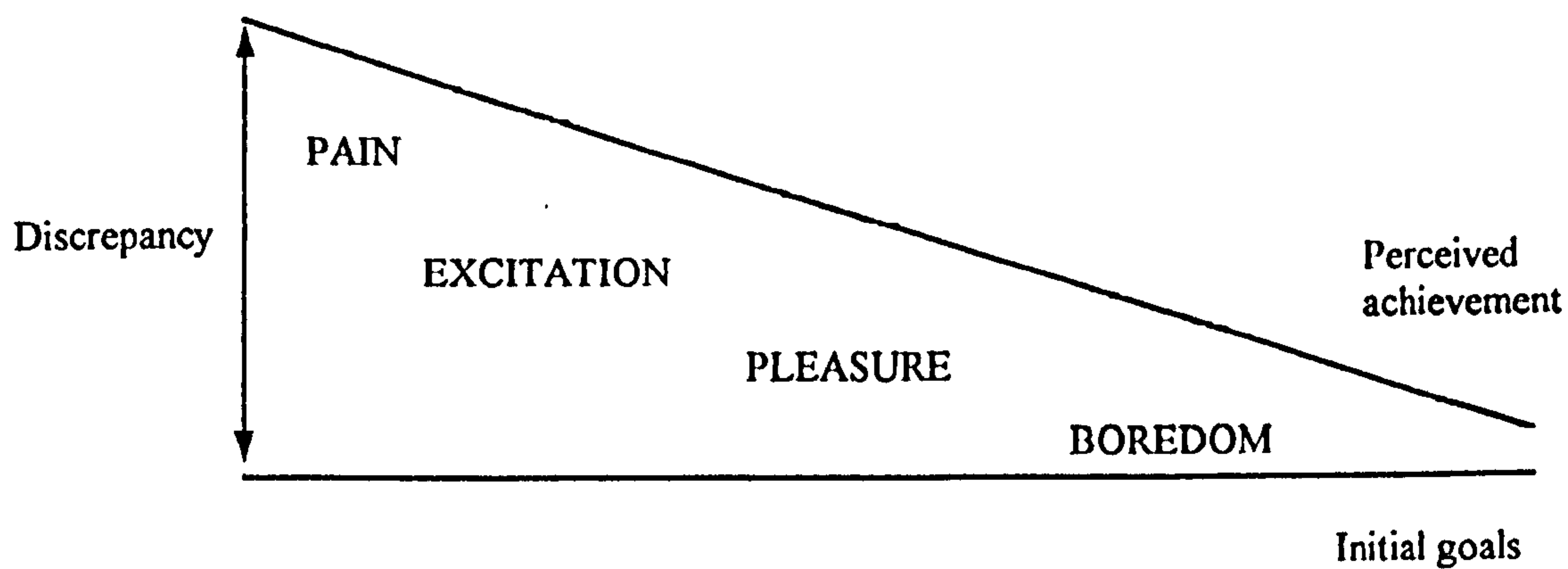
## Satisfaction as the result of a discrepancy between individuals' goals and achievement perceptions

Goal setting is fundamental to the achievement and feeling of success. Simon's 'satisficing' concept (1982) integrates them to a large extent with levels of satisfaction and success. Bhidé, in his article on « the questions every entrepreneur must answer » (1996), states that before entrepreneurs can set goals for their business, they must first determine what their personal goals are. Simon (1996) entitles one of his chapters "Are the hidden champions successful?". The firms he refers to have been selected on the basis of their market share and sales value, however, the author wonders : "What is success in business ? Of course, everyone knows, success depends on goals. If the goals are achieved or overachieved, a company is successful". This view of success as meeting goals supports the need for a subjective and individual-based approach of success. Daily and Dalton (1992) referring to Smith and Miner (1983), express that « Because small business owner-managers may have different goals, any given performance indicator may provide a biased view. For example, the 'opportunistic' entrepreneur is highly growth-oriented, while the 'craft' entrepreneur is not ». The integration of individuals' goals and expectations to evaluate their satisfaction and success is developed in the discrepancy theory. This theory examines individual satisfaction as the result of a perceived gap between the individual's standards of comparison (initial goals or expectations) and actual experiences. Michalos' (1986) review states that 90 % of the studies referring to the discrepancy theory find significant relationships between satisfaction levels and so-defined 'gaps', providing thus support to the discrepancy theory. Touzard, Lancry-Hoelstandt and Harpaz (1992) study the relationship between type of job position, behaviours and appreciations, and satisfaction / well being at work. Their findings also confirm that satisfaction is correlated with general well being and with the gap between expectations and achievement (Touzard et al., 1992: 112).

Michalos identifies six types of discrepancies, out of which the 'goal – achievement gap theory' according to which the gap between the individual's initial goals and their achievement result in more or less high levels of satisfaction (Michalos, 1986). The relationship between goals, perceived achievement and satisfaction are presented in Figure 4.4.



**Figure 4.4.- Satisfaction as the result of a discrepancy between goals and perceived achievement**



According to Hebb's Stimulus Pattern Model (in McClelland et al. 1953) initially applied to motivation theory, a high level of discrepancy between expectations and perceptions induces feelings of despair and pain, a lower discrepancy leads to boredom, whereas a fit or perceived congruence causes stimulation and satisfaction to the individual. Simon (1982) states that the managers' levels of motivation are dependent on the perception they have of the amount of additional effort requested to gain higher levels of achievement. In other words, is the effort to reduce the gap between expectations and achievement worthy? Cooper and Artz (1995) also suggest that the entrepreneurs' satisfaction with their business may have an influence on survival or growth, in the sense that entrepreneurs' willingness to invest more time and money may depend upon their present level of satisfaction.

As far as the proximity of both concepts of satisfaction and success is considered, it appears necessary to pay attention to the owner-managers' personal standards, and to compare them with perceived achievement. Within this approach, self-reported measures were used by some researchers to evaluate success (Mac Lure 1990, Van Gelderen 1997). Poynter (1991) uses a self definition of success evaluated through the satisfaction of personal goals, of financial goals, personal feelings of the firm being a success, and personal accomplishment with the firm.

The Index for Global Success evaluation method described in this section tends to integrate both the individual's preferences (relative importance given to each dimension of success) and their respective levels of perceived achievement. The combination of these self-reported measures provides the Index for Global Success of the individual.

## Distinction between success and satisfaction

Both success and satisfaction deal with goals, expectations and their perceived achievement. Success may be considered as a state of satisfaction, and it appears that these two notions are very closely connected. However, a distinction can be made on the basis of the following statement : satisfaction is the « successful attainment of a goal », while success is the « attainment of a set of goals known as the conception of success ». Most studies previously referred to deal with job satisfaction, or 'entrepreneurial success'. As developed before, success is yet a three-dimensional concept encompassing familial and personal aspects beyond the business dimension.

According to Bruyat (1994), success is the result of the combination of both the firm's performance and the business founder's satisfaction. He has established a 'dialogic' of success and failure of business founders, according to both the performance of the firm, and the satisfaction of the founder, which suggests that firm's performance and owner-manager's satisfaction may not go together (Bruyat, 1994 : 93). It is only when both firm's performance and individual satisfaction are combined, that success is achieved. This definition could be re-labelled in other terms as the combination of professional, personal and familial success. Success is seen as a more global notion than satisfaction : individuals may reach satisfaction in one specific expectation, but they can only be considered as successful when satisfaction is attained at levels which prove in accordance with the respective weights they personally give to the respective dimensions. As far as the present research is concerned, satisfaction will be preferably referred to as perceived achievement.

## 4.5. SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

While the notions of growth, performance and success are often confused with one another in the related literature, a lexical analysis provides elements of difference and thus supports the need to clearly distinguish between these notions through their definition and conceptualisation. Performance and growth illustrate the firm's results and provide means to analyse and interpret these. Quantitative methods of data collection and analysis can be used to measure performance. While growth is always measured as the *business* growth, based on economic and financial data at



the firm's level, a better understanding of growth processes requires the integration of non-economic concerns, studied at the individual's level. Success-related studies also need to take into account subjective elements, and refer to the individual -small firm's owner-manager, rather than to the firm as the unit of analysis.

Success is defined as a more global psychological and social construct that needs to be studied at the individual's level. It encompasses three dimensions : personal, familial and professional success. Business performance and growth are integrated in the professional dimension of success. The structure validity of these three domains is discussed in section 7.4.2.

The overlapping of the three dimensions of success supports the need for a composite index to evaluate success. In order to define the individual's conception of success, the components of each dimension of success should be identified and the dimensions' relative importance assessed. Insights from the existing theory suggest that satisfaction and expectations are also important elements of evaluation for success. Self reported measures of both personal ideal standards and perceived achievement should thus be integrated in the operationalisation of success. The Index for Global Success evaluation method is fully described in section 5.

The conceptual framework elaborated to define and describe the relationships between growth, performance and success will be used in the present dissertation, for a better use of these terms and an increased relevance of the findings. Globally in the present research, 'performance' refers to the firm's financial and economic results, while 'success' refers to the more global and complex concept previously described.

As far as satisfaction and success are concerned, success is also seen as a wider notion : individuals are 'successful' when satisfaction is reached in all three dimensions (professional, familial and personal success) in accordance with personal standards. As far as the present research is concerned, 'satisfaction' will be preferably referred to as 'perceived achievement'.

A general definition for success could be labelled as : *an ideal state of global satisfaction that may relate to family, personal or work fulfilment feelings, according to individual preferences.*

## **5. METHODS**

### **5.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS**

**5.1.1. General research questions : Small firm owner-managers' visions of success and the importance of non economic concerns**

**5.1.2. Exploring gender-based differences in visions of success**

**5.1.3. Hypothesis testing : high- and low success perceivers, satisfaction and business performance**

### **5.2. FROM CONCEPTUALISATION TO OPERATIONALISATION OF SUCCESS**

### **5.3. EMPIRICAL STUDY - METHODS AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

**5.3.1. Sampling procedure**

**5.3.2. Data collection and analyses**



The literature review and preliminary findings have resulted in the elaboration of the conceptual framework for the present dissertation. The definition of success as a subjective, individual, and three-dimensional concept provides directions for the research questions and hypothesis that need to be formulated.

In order to provide answers to the research questions and test the hypothesis, a methods framework is designed. The subjective approach taken in the present research must not understate the need for operationalisation of success. Evaluation tools are essential to give legitimacy to the concept of success and to conduct further research. The problematic point is to respect the individualised and subjective aspects of success, while operationalising it and developing an evaluation method. The methods described in this section are expected to be of highest value for further research and a necessary step to complete the reflection presented in this dissertation.

## 5.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

A methodological issue is addressed on the operationalisation of success, which will be developed in this section. General research questions relate to the small firms owner-managers' visions of success and the importance of non-economic concerns within these. They are formulated in a descriptive way. More specifically, the influence of gender on visions of success is explored. Finally, a research hypothesis is elaborated on the links between the Index for Global Success, satisfaction and business performance.

### 5.1.1. General research questions : Small firm owner-managers' visions of success and the importance of non economic concerns

The first research question addresses a methodological issue : *Q.1 - How can success be operationalised and evaluated ?* The main difficulty with this evaluation issue is to combine operationalisation and respect of the high subjectivity of success. The apparent paradox between a general evaluation method and an individualised approach of success is discussed in section 7.4. The research methods are fully described in section 5, with a specific focus on the elaboration of the

index for global success. This evaluation method consists in identifying the components included in the individuals' definitions of professional, familial and personal success. Then the relative importance of each dimension is assessed and further combined with self-reported levels of perceived achievement. The following research questions relate to these data in an exploratory and descriptive way :

*Q.2 - How do the respondents define professional, personal and familial success ?*

*Q.3 - Which relative weight do they give to each of these dimensions ?*

*Q.4 - How do they perceive their own achievement in each dimension of success ?*

A list of items that may be identified by the respondents as components for professional, familial and personal success has been established and adjusted according to the preliminary findings of the interviews. They are presented in figure 5.1.

As far as the relative importance of each dimension and the levels of perceived achievement are concerned, it is expected that the owner-managers rate higher professional success than familial and personal dimensions, due to their involvement in the firm and the time and energy dedicated to work. However, as described previously, it is also expected that non-economic concerns and personal matters receive considerable importance : beyond the description of small firms owner-managers' visions of success, the answers to these research questions are also expected to provide empirical insights on the importance of non economic concerns in these visions of success (see section 2.3. in the literature review), what leads to the fifth research question :

*Q.5 – What is the importance of non-economic concerns in the respondents' visions of success ?*

Related findings will conclude section 6.1. on general issues.



**Figure 5.1. – Constitutive elements of professional, familial and personal success**

Constitutive elements of *professional* success

to generate employment
to have a good profitability
welfare and feeling of commitment of the employees
to manage an important firm in terms of sales volume
to be the leader on one's market
to ensure the durability of the firm
to develop the firm
to innovate, to anticipate
to progress in terms of one's own career
to ensure oneself a comfortable income
other : .....

Constitutive elements of *familial* success

to share leisure time with one's family
to see one's children grow
to have a stable and united household
to transmit values to one's children
to ensure one's family income
to constitute a legacy for one's children
other : .....

Constitutive elements of *personal* success

to follow one's values and principles
to accomplish one's dreams
to surpass oneself and be in a constant challenge
to be well known, to have social recognition
to have a peaceful life
to have comfortable earnings
to constantly learn through new experiences and contacts
to have available time for one's passions, sports or leisure
other : .....

### 5.1.2. Exploring gender-based differences in visions of success

Socio-cultural and profile-related elements that may influence owner-managers' visions of success are discussed. However, subjective elements (entrepreneurial propensity of the individual, familial background etc.) have been measured through self-reported perceptions, and are thus subject to interpretation by both the respondent and the researcher. Therefore, it was decided to focus on an objectively identified elements. Cooper and Artz (1995) have studied the influence of age and gender on entrepreneurs' satisfaction. They have found out that both variables had no influence on the entrepreneurs' assessment of the likelihood of success. Yet, while it was demonstrated that age had no relationship with later satisfaction, gender was identified as a discriminating variable.

The increasing concern for gender issues and its accuracy to discriminate among the sample motivate the choice to focus on this variable in the present study. Moreover, women owner-managers appear to be a most relevant population to study the overlapping of professional, personal and familial dimensions (section 1.1.5.). The literature review (section 2.4.2.) suggests that males and females have different visions of success, and that females may give higher importance to the familial and personal dimensions of success. They are also expected to report higher levels of satisfaction.

The aim is to explore gender-based differences in visions of success, according to the related research question formulated as follows.:

*Q.6. Do male and female respondents' visions of success differ ?*

This research question is dealt with in section 6.2. through a comparative analysis of male and female respondents' visions of success, and according to the evaluation method described in section 5. This exploratory study should be seen as an illustration and a first step towards a better understanding of the elements influencing the individuals' visions of success.



### 5.1.3. Hypothesis testing : high- and low success perceivers, satisfaction and business performance

High- and low success perceivers are identified on the basis of their index for global success (IGS). This index reflects the respondents' success, evaluated according to their own criteria : the relative importance they assess to each dimension of success is coupled with respective levels of perceived achievement for professional, familial and personal success. The subjectivity of the so-evaluated success leads to the label of high-success 'perceivers' rather than 'successful' owner-managers. A comparative study on high- and low success perceivers is conducted to identify the differences that may appear.

The link between Index for Global Success, business performance and individual satisfaction is also investigated. Riffault (1994) has identified a significative correlation between work satisfaction, global satisfaction in life and satisfaction with regards to the financial situation of the family. She found that individuals with a high level of work satisfaction also considered themselves as very happy (Riffault, 1994: 104). Work success perception was also identified by Rothberg (1990) as being positively correlated with the individual's well being, evaluated through life satisfaction and feelings about life. While success is defined in the present dissertation as an overall state of satisfaction in professional, familial and personal dimensions, it is interesting to keep these works in mind. Their findings suggest that professional satisfaction and overall satisfaction are correlated, and that multiple dimensions are inter-dependent as far as success and satisfaction are concerned. Work and private success being closely linked, they support the use of a composite index such as the Index for Global Success.

These results can also interestingly be connected to Bruyat's work on business founders. Bruyat (1994) has established a 'dialogic' of success and failure, according to both the performance of the firm, and the satisfaction of the founder. The resulting chart shows that firm's performance and owner-manager's satisfaction may not go together, the discrepancy being thus named 'disaster' (low performance and low satisfaction), 'spoliation' (high performance and low satisfaction), or 'fraud' (low performance and high satisfaction). Bruyat defines success as the result of a high level of firm's performance combined with a high level of individual's satisfaction (Bruyat, 1994 : 93).

According to these previous findings, it is hypothesised that ‘success’, evaluated through the Index for Global Success, business performance and global satisfaction are positively correlated. The research hypothesis *H.7 – High success perceivers also report higher levels of business performance and global satisfaction*, is tested and accepted in section 6.3, supporting the relevance of the IGS method to evaluate individual success.

## 5.2. FROM CONCEPTUALISATION TO OPERATIONALISATION OF SUCCESS

Success is defined as an individual-based, subjective notion encompassing three dimensions: professional, familial and personal success. Based on this definition, an evaluation method is elaborated to measure success according to the conceptual framework.

The operationalisation of success as a subjective notion sounds as an ambiguous challenge. However, self-administered questionnaires can provide methodological instruments to collect the owner-managers’ own definitions of success, the relative importance they give to each dimension of success, and respective levels of perceived achievement. Thanks to these data, an evaluation method is suggested to evaluate success as a subjective, individual-based notion, through both the conception of success, as a qualitative measure, and the Index for Global Success, that can be quantified.

In a first phase, the owner-managers are asked to identify which components they personally integrate in their own definition of personal, familial and professional success. The combination of these elements determines their *definition of success*. Then the relative importance they give to each dimension of success is identified as a percentage. The combination of their definition of success with these weights provides the owner-managers’ *conception of success*. The Index for Global Success can then be measured through self-reported levels of perceived achievement in each dimension of success. Levels of perceived achievement are weighted according to the importance given to each dimension of success, resulting in the calculation of the *Index for Global Success*. Success is thus measured as the degree to which individuals perceive their meeting an ideal vision of success.



**Figure 5.2. – The conception of success**

<i>Definition of success : constitutive elements</i>	<i>Relative weights</i>	<i>Conception of success</i>
professional	%	constitutive elements of each dimension and respective weights
familial	%	
personal	%	

*(Total of the weights equals 100)*

The constitutive elements of each dimension of success, providing the definition of success for each individual, cannot be quantified. The conception of success thus remains a qualitative instrument. This method is recommended when studying the conceptions of success of a reduced sample of owner-managers in the context of interviews. Still, it was integrated in the research questionnaire. Descriptive statistics can be used to observe the respondents’ definitions and conceptions of success. For that purpose, a list of constitutive elements for professional, familial and personal dimensions was suggested on the basis of the findings drawn from the preliminary interviews and the existing literature. The opportunity to complement this list with additional elements was given to the respondents. The results from the empirical survey are presented in section 6.1.

**The Index for Global Success (IGS)**

In concordance with the general definition provided for success in section 4 : *an ideal state of global satisfaction that may relate to family, personal or work fulfilment feelings, according to individual preferences*, the Index for Global Success is designed to combine the relative importance of each dimension of success with related level of achievement.

**Figure 5.3. – The Index for Global Success**

<i>Relative importance of each dimension</i>	<i>Levels of perceived achievement</i>	<i>Index for Global Success (IGS)</i>
%	Weight	sum of relative importance * levels of perceived achievement for each dimension
%	Weight	
%	Weight	

*(Total of the % and total of the weights both equal 100)*

The qualitative data concerning the respondent’s definition of success are not integrated in the calculation of the Index for Global Success. The purpose at this stage is to operationalise success and provide a quantified measurement tool. However, the aim is not to compare actual tangible realities, but rather perceptions of success as a highly subjective and individual notion.

The definitions on which the evaluation is based may be different for each individual, but what is really measured through the Index for Global Success is the respondents’ perceived success, whatever its constitutive components. The variety in the definitions of success does not alter the validity of this index to quantify each individual’s perception of his/her own success. This can thus be measured according to the relative importance given to the professional, familial and personal dimensions of success and the respective levels of perceived achievement reported. A discussion on the structure validity of the three domains in the IGS is conducted in section 7.4.

**Figure 5.4. – Index for Global Success Formula**

*Weighted sum of perceived achievement for each dimension of success*

$$IGS = (Wpr * Spr) + (Wfa * Sfa) + (Wpe * Spe)$$



The variable W represents the relative importance (weight, %) given by the respondents to each dimension of success (pr = professional, fa = familial, pe = personal). The variable S represents the level of perceived achievement (satisfaction) for each dimension.

The related questions were addressed as simply as possible for the respondents. In order to keep them clear and avoid any confusion, two different questions designs were used. A percentage was requested to assess the relative importance of each dimension of success, total being 100, whilst the levels of perceived achievement had to be ranked on a 4-item literal scale (from 'not at all' to 'totally'). For measurement purposes, a numeric coefficient was thus associated afterwards to each level of perceived achievement as follows :

not at all	→ 0
a little	→ 1
quite	→ 2
totally	→ 3

The choice of the coefficients may raise the problem of distance between the statements. However, the use made in the present research of descriptive and comparative statistics, unlike regression analyses, considerably reduces the relevance of this issue. Moreover, the aim of the present study is to use the IGS in order to compare subsamples. Most important is thus to respect the same methodology for all respondents : all Indices for Global Success are evaluated on the same methodological basis.

The Index for Global Success is one of the elements integrated in the first analysis describing the respondents' visions of success. The IGS is also an element of differentiation used in the second study and it is expected to vary between male and female respondents. In the third analysis, the methodology consists in calculating the Index for Global Success for each respondent, and gathering respondents with the same range of index. Differences can then be identified between high- and low success perceivers.

The benefits and limits of this approach are developed in the discussion section 7.

### 5.3. EMPIRICAL STUDY - METHODS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology used for the empirical study consists in a postal survey, conducted during the Summer 1998 through questionnaires sent to small firms owner-managers. The sampling procedure, data collection and analyses are described below.

#### 5.3.1. Sampling procedure

The sample is selected according to some methodological restrictions. For the present study, the owner-managers surveyed run businesses that employ 10 to 50 co-workers and control at least 50 % of the capitalshare. The size limit of 10 to 49 employees used for the present research follows the definition for small firms provided by the French INSEE, national institute for statistics on population and business, used by most researchers in France and in the European Union. Medium-sized businesses are defined by INSEE as employing 50 to 499 co-workers. These definitions will be used in the present dissertation, when referring to SMEs, small and medium firms.

The limitation to small businesses is adopted because it is assumed that the manager has a greater influence, if any, in small structures (Daily and Dalton, 1992). Moreover, the particularities of success-related issues as presented in section 2.2. and the role of entrepreneurs as modern heroes increase the relevance to study success in this context. Small firms are complex organisations with a high growing potential. In France, 166.000 new firms are created per annum, out of which 80 % have no employee (APCE, 1999). Only 3 % of new firms become SMEs after five years of existence (Bonneau, 1994: 30). The better understanding of growth processes that may result from the present research on success is thus a crucial issue as far as French small firms are concerned.

As stated before, a large majority of newly created firms have less than 10 employees (micro enterprises). Therefore, the limitation to small firms is also expected to limit the biases induced by the impact of the stage of start-up on the owner-manager's behaviour and aspirations (Churchill and Lewis 1983, Kroeger 1974, Lorrain Belle and Ramanghaly 1994).



Carland, Hoy, Boulton and Carland (1984) have characterised the small business owner as seeing the business as an extension of his/her personality, and the entrepreneur as having an innovative business behaviour. Why not focus on entrepreneurs in the present study ? Entrepreneurs represent a minority of small firms' owner-managers, whilst the social, economic and employment role of the latter justify the broader focus on this population . In the entrepreneurship literature, entrepreneurs are most of the time defined as business leaders with a strong growth orientation (Chell, Halworth and Brearley, 1991). More globally, the attributes identified as specific entrepreneurial characteristics often imply business success and are described as potential key success factors. Therefore, entrepreneurs' conceptions of success are expected to be very specific and a sample restriction to entrepreneurs would be damageable to the variety and relevance of the results.

Carland, Hoy, Boulton and Carland's (1984) definition of the small business owner seeing the business as an extension of his/her personality follows our study's assumptions of proximity and commitment of the owner to the business. Focus is placed on small businesses owner-managers, who operate their business and remain highly connected to and concerned with success. This restriction makes particularly good sense in small entities, in which the manager is most often the owner of the firm and is confronted both to operational as well as strategic issues. Carsrud and Olm expressed their regret that "many studies do not distinguish between sole (100 percent) owners, controlling owners with less than 100 percent, and minority owners" (Carsrud and Olm, 1986: 150). The decision was made to select owner-managers controlling at least 50 % of the capital. This sampling procedure also follows the definition by d'Amboise and Gasse : "The owner-manager is the person who participates, in a meaningful proportion, in the ownership of a firm and who takes part in the decisions relative to the general orientation and the solution of the everyday problems of that firm". The "meaningful proportion" has been set up, for the purpose of the present study, at 50 % of the capital at least, controlled by the owner-manager, i.e. owned directly plus indirectly through family or friends capital shares.

The selection of the sample also seeks to reduce the role of external parties and constraints. Those are limited in small firms as compared to large companies : no or few stockholders, no personnel committee or representatives, few lobbying groups. It has been decided to focus on owner-managers controlling at least 50 % of the capitalshare, in order to minimise the effects of these pressure

elements on the decisions made and the orientations of the firm. This limitation also reinforces the independence and centrality of the owner-managers' role, their implication, which are essential to our perspective.

### 5.3.2. Data collection and analyses

A questionnaire was designed to investigate the owner-managers' conceptions of success through the application of the evaluation method described before, and in direct relation with the research problematic. It mainly deals with self-reported expectations and perceptions of the respondents.

The questionnaire was tested through a pilot study before the final survey. It was sent to owner-managers who had already been interviewed, and relevant modifications were integrated. The questionnaire was also presented to other researchers during research centres' meetings and international conferences. Some re-adjustments were made according to their comments.

#### Presentation of the questionnaire

The questionnaire addresses issues on :

- the respondent's initial motivations to become an owner-manager
- the relative importance of economic, political and familial logics (based on Bauer's work, 1995)
- willingness to expand the firm
- attitude toward changes and vision of the future
- entrepreneurial propensity of the owner-manager (based on entrepreneurial personality characteristics identified in the entrepreneurship literature : need for achievement and social recognition, risk propensity and taste for challenge, Type A and dynamism, self confidence, independence, creativity, and growth orientation)
- extra-professional activities : their nature and intensity
- the tripod personal / familial / professional successes : the owner-manager's feelings on potential combination of these, and relative importance in global success



- the elements defining each dimension of success, according to the respondent
- the perceived level of success achievement for familial, personal and professional dimensions
- various elements on the owner-manager's familial and educational environment as a child
- educational level and previous experience
- socio-demographic elements
- data on the firm's identity and results over the past five years, as well as growth patterns (Delmar and Davidsson, 1998)
- potential multiple business ownership.

The issues are addressed through multiple questioning ; some control questions are included to ensure the accuracy of the owner-manager's answers and their coherence. For example, the owner-managers' satisfaction is evaluated through their answer to the question « do you feel you have reached your initial goals ? », but also « for the same amount of revenue, would you prefer to work in a large company ? », and « would you say that you have a flourishing family life ? ». The replies to this questionnaire were expected to provide valuable findings on the owner-managers' conceptions of success and related issues. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix One.

### Survey Characteristics

The confidentiality of the questionnaire was guaranteed, and a proposition to send the results upon request was integrated in order to improve the response rate, which is generally very low in France. The final postal survey was achieved in June 1998 with a questionnaire sent to a randomly selected sample. The Centre of Studies and Research EURO PME provided the funds to conduct the survey. The initial sample was thus widened to respect the Centre EURO PME's methodological and research guidelines. It consisted in both micro enterprises (0-10 employees) and small and medium-sized firms (10-49 and 50-499 employees). It was also constituted of a higher proportion of female managers than the French population in order to follow the Centre EURO PME's orientation for women studies. Details for the initial send out stand as shown in Figure 5.5.

**Figure 5.5. – Details for the initial send out**

Source - Origin of the data	Nature of the sample	Number of firms surveyed
INSEE – SIRENE file	(10-50 employees)	4056
KOMPASS	(0-500 employees, female only)	2162
EURO PME respondents	(10-500 employees)	825
<i>TOTAL</i>		<i>7043</i>

The sample procedure for the present study was then applied within the replies received. The selection process from the 7043 questionnaires received to the final number of questionnaires to be analysed is described in Figure 5.6.

**Figure 5.6. – Selection process of the replies**

total sent out	7043
total replies received	623
input of replies	494
with valid completion	333
size constraint (10 to 50 employees)	272
majority in capitalshare ( $\geq 50\%$ )	236
<i>FINAL TOTAL - Data to be analysed</i>	<i>236</i>

The total number of small and medium sized firms in France is estimated at 164,000 in 1997 (INSEE, 1999b: 426). Besides the widenings of the population surveyed, which bias the final response rate, the exact proportion of small firms and of capitalshare-controlling owner-managers in the initial sample are not provided by the French statistics institutions. An accurate response rate could thus not be determined. The purpose of the present research is not to produce generalisable findings, but to draw findings on the respondents' visions of success and thus provide insights and better knowledge on small firms' owner-managers.



## Analyses procedure description

In order to investigate the respondents' visions of success, the operationalisation of success developed in section 5 is applied. Thanks to this evaluation method, the observation of the respondents' expectations and perceptions on success are made possible (section 6.1). These steps are expected to provide answers to the first research questions :

*Q.1 - How can success be operationalised and evaluated ?*

*Q.2 - How do the respondents define professional, personal and familial success ?*

*Q.3 - Which relative weight do they give to each of these dimensions ?*

*Q.4 - How do they perceive their own achievement in each dimension of success ?*

*Q.5 – What is the importance of non-economic concerns in the respondents' visions of success ?*

Then the research question on gender-based differences in the respondents' visions of success is explored through comparative descriptive statistics in section 6.2.

*Q.6. Do male and female respondents' visions of success differ?*

Finally, the research hypothesis on the Index for Global Success, business performance and respondent's satisfaction is tested in section 6.3. The sample is split into high- and low success perceivers, based on their Index for Global Success as described in the present section, to test the following :

*H.7 – High success perceivers also report higher levels of business performance and global satisfaction.*

The findings resulting from these analyses are all presented in the next section 6.

## **6. FINDINGS**

### **6.1. RESPONDENTS' VISIONS OF SUCCESS**

**6.1.1. Respondents' characteristics and profile**

**6.1.2. Visions of success**

**6.1.3. Synthesis and conclusion**

### **6.2. EXPLORING GENDER-BASED COMPARATIVE VISIONS OF SUCCESS**

**6.2.1. Groups of respondents' respective characteristics and profiles**

**6.2.2. Comparative visions of success**

**6.2.3. Synthesis and conclusion**

### **6.3. HIGH- AND LOW SUCCESS PERCEIVERS : HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

**6.3.1. High- and low success perceivers' backgrounds**

**6.3.2. Relative importance of each dimension and levels of success achievement**

**6.3.3. Professional success and related issues**

**6.3.4. Familial success, work and private life**

**6.3.5. Personal success, initial motivations and global satisfaction**

**6.3.6. Synthesis and hypothesis acceptance**



## 6.1. RESPONDENTS' VISIONS OF SUCCESS

The first section on empirical findings deals with the respondents' general characteristics and profile. The complete frequencies of replies to the questionnaire for the global sample are presented in Appendix Two. As far as their visions of success are concerned, descriptive statistics are used to answer the following research questions :

*Q.2 - How do the respondents define professional, personal and familial success ?*

*Q.3 - Which relative weight do they give to each of these dimensions ?*

*Q.4 - How do they perceive their own achievement in each dimension of success ?*

*Q.5 – What is the importance of non-economic concerns in the respondents' visions of success ?*

### 6.1.1. Respondents' characteristics and profile

The firms run by the respondents employ 39 employees and have an age of 29 years in average. They operate in various sectors of activities, in concordance with the French small and medium enterprises as presented in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1. – Sectors of activities of the respondents' firms and of French small firms

	Retail trade	Services	Manufacturing	Construction	Transports
Respondents' firms	29.2 %	25.0 %	22.9 %	11.4 %	5.5 %
French SMEs (INSEE, 1999a : 141)	25.7 %	26.0 %	24.5 %	13.3 %	6.0 %

The respondents are 47 years old in average, from 26 for the youngest to 70, and 99.2 % of them are French. The proportion of female owner-managers is 20.3 % against 79.7 % males, while previous studies have found that 8 % of small firms owner-managers were female (Duchéneaut, 1996b : 195). As explained previously (see section 5), the initial sample includes a higher proportion of women for research purposes. This bias was not corrected in order to get a larger

subsample of female owner-managers and make statistical comparisons on a gender basis (section 6.2).

### Initial motivations to become an owner-manager

The most quoted item is 'to create and achieve something', selected by 50.4 % of the respondents as one of their three most important initial motivations. It is followed by independence (33.9 %), accomplishment (30.1 %) and familial tradition (26.7 %). More motivations related to familial concerns include : to constitute a patrimony for one's children : 14 %, to guarantee one's family's living : 10.6 %. The less quoted items refer to social status (1.7 %), social recognition and economic contribution or moral duty (all quoted by 2.1 % of the respondents). The low scores of social status and social recognition are rather surprising as far as the need for social recognition is one of the determinants to go into business identified in the entrepreneurship literature. It appears that the initial motivations of the respondents to become owner-managers are mainly personal- and familial oriented, more than in relation to the society or the economic environment.

Financial matters also seem to receive little interest from the respondents : it is the prospect of achievement satisfaction, rather than money, that seems to drive small firms owner-managers. According to Delmar, referring to entrepreneurs, money is rather a measure on how well one is doing (Delmar, 1996: 14).

### Satisfaction

While the study by Collins et al. (1964) indicated low levels of job satisfaction for their sample of entrepreneurs, almost half of the respondents consider that their initial motivations to become an owner-manager have been totally fulfilled (47.5 %). Only 8.5 % do not feel satisfied with regards to these. All things considered, 25.8 % declare totally happy. Together with the 'rather happy' replies, a majority of 84.7 % of the respondents can be considered as globally happy. This can be compared to the global French population's results : Riffault (1994) finds that 26 % of the French declare very happy, and that 92 % are globally happy. Referring to the previous weeks, 68% of the respondents



feel that they have succeeded in something. When asked to give a mark to represent their satisfaction with their present life, an average of 7.08 out of ten is found. Compared with the French global population average mark at 6.78 (Riffault, 1994), the sample reports a slightly higher level of global satisfaction towards life.

However, as far as specific money concerns are observed, 64.8 % of the respondents feel rather or totally satisfied with their level of personal income, and 44.9 % think that the revenue they get from the firm is under-estimated with respect to the work they achieve. The respondents' average income is estimated at FF 469,350 per annum (to be compared to the average net income of French employees : FF 128,220 according to the INSEE in 1996, and the average income of French business leaders : FF 772,000 according to the magazine L'Entreprise, 1994). Most of the respondents (74.2 %) would not prefer to work for a large firm for the same amount of revenue. The reason given most frequently is related to their need for independence (68.2 %).

### Entrepreneurial propensity

Twenty questions in the questionnaire deal with the entrepreneurial propensity of the respondents. They relate to the respondent's growth orientation, attitude towards challenge and risk, self confidence, energy and optimism, need for independence and need for achievement (see questionnaire in Appendix One).

A large majority of the respondents (81.8 %) would rather run a business with moderate profits and good survival chances than a firm with high potential profits and high risks. The respondents mainly agree with the statements according to which they often take initiatives (69.9 %) and have a strong need for independence (51.7 %). Almost half of them also recognise that they like to know where they go (49.6 %) and that they always finish what they have started (47 %). 42.8 % of them consider themselves as hyperactive characters. On the other hand, very few of them like to be taken as models (3 %) or need social recognition (4.2 %).

These findings tend to demonstrate that the sample is made of both highly entrepreneurial characters and less entrepreneurial respondents. This diversity which can be observed in the small firms' owner-managers population reflects a reality already stated by many researchers (Daily and Dalton

1992, Delmar 1996, Gray 1998, Smith and Miner 1983). Moreover, as long as success is considered as a subjective construct, the heterogeneity of the sample has the benefit to gather various profiles and thus generate extended knowledge on small firms owner-managers' multiple visions of success. A comparative study has been conducted in the first time on two subsamples selected on the basis of the respondents' entrepreneurial orientation. However, it was then decided, for validity purpose as previously explained, to rely on objective variables such as gender rather than on subjective evaluations to discriminate among the respondents and compare the subsamples' visions of success (see section 6.2.).

### Familial background

The sample is well distributed as far as rural versus urban environment, financial state and educational level of the respondents' childhood context are concerned. A majority of them (62.3 %) were brought up in a religious environment. On the other hand, only 36.5 % have evolved in a politically-engaged environment.

As far as pedagogy is concerned, 76.2 % of the respondents were self-responsible. More than half of them (52.1 %) report a familial environment motivated by the taste for challenge and risk, and for 67.4 % of them, priority was given to work (versus 31.4 % according to whom priority was given to family life). Effort was a shared value in 81.8 % of the cases, while ambition was common to 59.7 % of the familial environments. A majority reports dialogue within the family (56 %), while only 45.7 % have experienced a true liberalness of ideas as a child. Priority was given to the respect of hierarchy and age (68.6 %) more than to equality and critical spirit (30.1 %).

Two respondents out of three come from sedentary families with strong local anchorage (66.1 % versus 32.6 % for 'geographical mobility'). Only 18.7 % were brought up in a re-structured family and 87.3 % have sisters and brothers (2.54 in average). There is no clear tendency regarding the position held by the respondents in their brotherhood.

The importance of the familial background has been demonstrated by many researchers in the entrepreneurship literature (Collins et al., 1964). It appears that most of the respondents have been brought up in an environment praising so-called 'Protestant values' : religion, due effort, priority to



work, respect of hierarchy and age. The causal relationship between these values and an entrepreneurial attitude was suggested by Weber (1930, 1968) who associated Protestant ethics with the proliferation of entrepreneurs. The present observations tend to support Weber's statements as far as owner-managers are concerned.

As far as their profession is concerned, 35.6 % of the respondents' fathers were running a business and 16.9 % were employees. Some 44.9 % of the respondents' mothers did not work and only 5.1 % ran a business. More than half of the respondents (51.3 %) perceive that their parents' profession has had an important influence on their decision to become an owner-manager. It is interesting to note that in 43.6 % of the cases other relatives were running a business. 64.4 % of the respondents received a support from their parents and relatives when the business was launched, mostly as a moral support (29.2 %) and through the transmission of the firm (28.4 %). They were also helped with financial support (21.2 %) and professional advice (20.8 %).

The familial history in business management is important, as the borderlines between familial, professional and even personal dimensions of success may be less distinct for owner-managers with a strong entrepreneurial background, when private and professional spheres have since long been overlapping each other. Similarly, the distinction is more difficult to make in family firms where spouses work together, sometimes even with their children. In that case, the dimensions obviously overlap each other more often and more intensively.

#### Educational background and professional experience

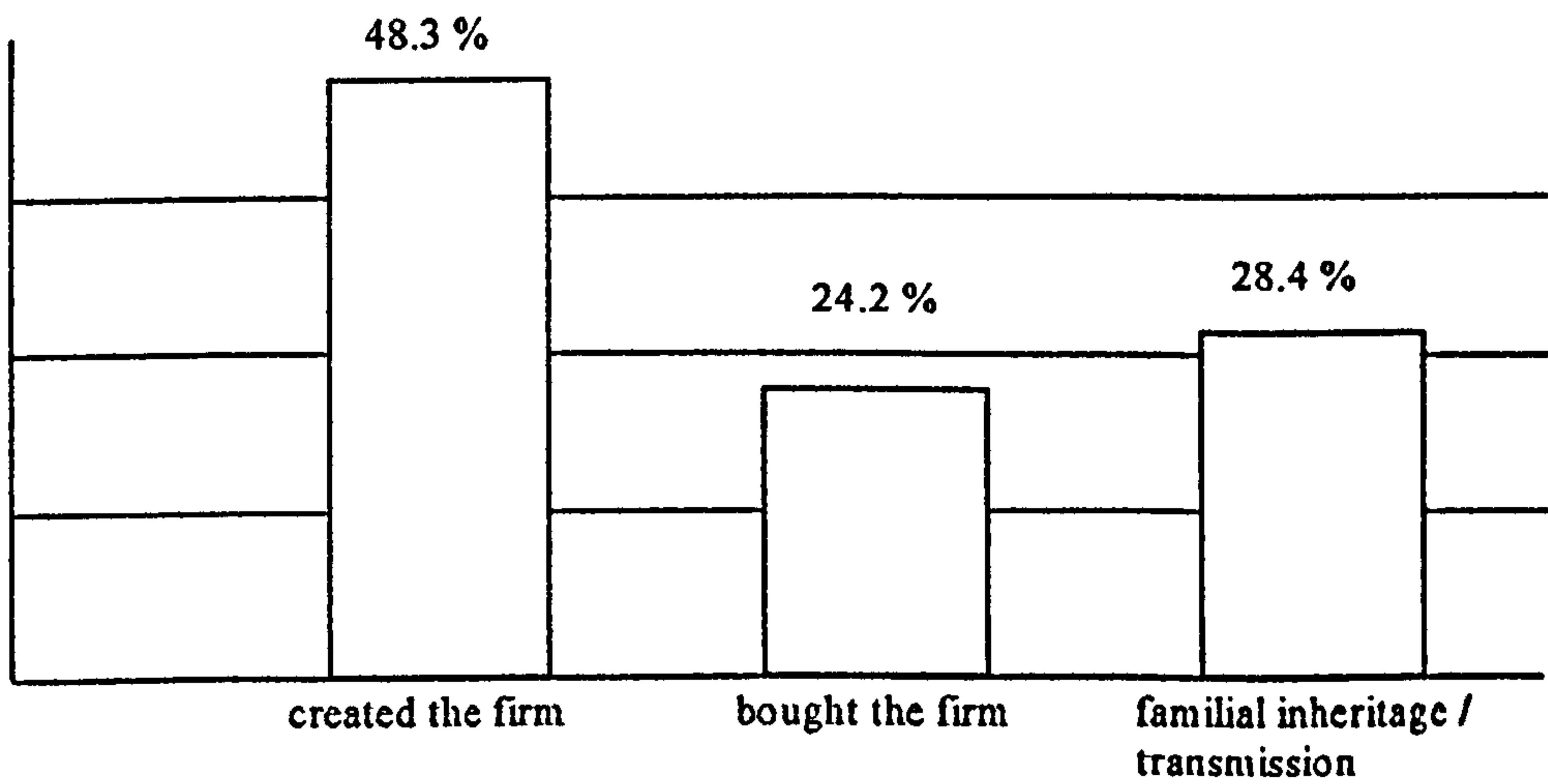
A large majority of the respondents (75.9 %) have a positive backwards perception on their student years and more than half of them (52.5 %) have received higher education after the Baccalauréat (A-level). The proportion of the French population with the Baccalauréat or a lower diploma is 73.1 % (INSEE, 1999a : 59) versus 46.2 % of the present small firms owner-managers sample.

**Figure 6.2. – Respondents’ educational background (last diploma obtained)**

	%		%
Below the Baccalauréat	25.0	>= Bac + 3: Business School	10.2
Baccalauréat	21.2	>= Bac + 3: Engineering School	9.3
Bac + 2	14.4	>= Bac + 3: others	18.6

The respondents are 47 years old in average. They have been running their business for 12.7 years. 28.4 % of them have inherited the business through familial transmission and 24.2 % have bought it. However, most of them (48.3 %) have created the firm, alone (33.9 %) or together with co-founders (12.7 %).

**Figure 6.3. - Origin of the capital**

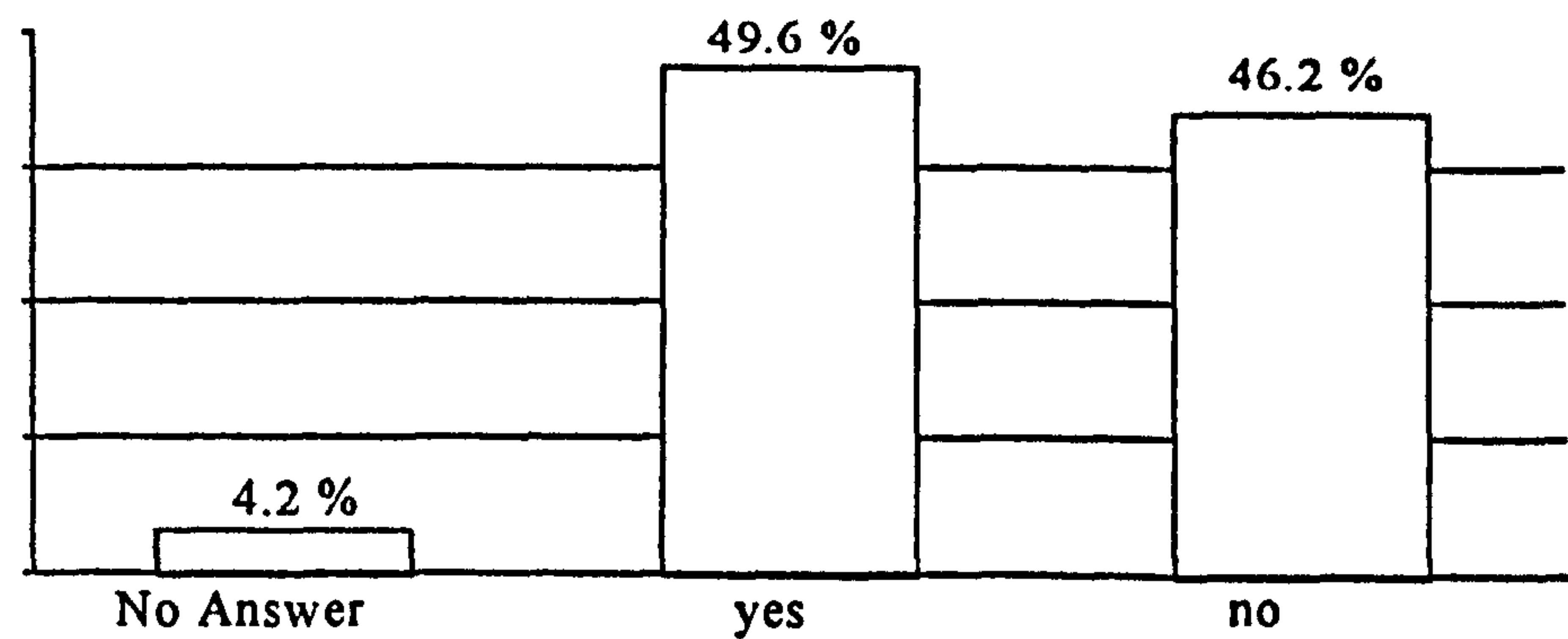


Before their present situation, 42.8 % were employed in another firm, 25.4 % in their present business, and only 8.9 % were running another business. Almost two respondents out of three have built their professional experience mainly as an employee (61.4 %) within 2.7 different firms in average. The respondents who have already run a business before (22 %) did so during 8.8 years, within 2 different firms, mostly small ones (less than 49 employees for 80.3 % of them) and as majority shareholders (61 % of the cases). 13.4 % of the respondents have thus a previous experience as an owner-manager.



During the past five years, 30.1 % have bought and 35.6 % have created one or more other firms (1.6 in average for both cases). Half of the respondents (49.6 %) are presently running other small businesses (2.6 firms in average, employing less than 50 people for 93 % of them). They have been running these firms for 8 years and 84.4 % of them are majority shareholders. As a result, 41.9 % of the respondents can thus be considered as multiple business owner-managers.

Figure 6.4. - Proportion of respondents running other business(es)



Work and private life

The respondents declare working 57.6 hours a week (legal working hours for employees in France in 1998 : 39 hours a week). The variations around this average are however quite important. They also take 3.37 weeks of holidays a year (legal holidays in France : 5 weeks). During their leisure time, 40.3 % are committed to extra-professional activities, and 29.7 % practice sports on a regular basis.

There is a large consensus on the fact that their personal life revolves around the firm (83.5 %) and 84.4 % of the respondents also recognise that they face conflicts between their personal, familial and professional priorities. Yet, most of them (76.3 %) believe that one can combine familial and professional success as an owner-manager. Only 13.6 % report that they have never faced such conflicts, while 26.3 % often do. The same proportion of respondents perceive negatively their family life' s flourishing (27.9 %). Most of the respondents are married for the first time (78 %), 15.2 % are divorced or re-married, and 5.9 % are single -while the proportion of bachelors in the French population stands around 30 % (INSEE, 1999a : 27). The average number of children they

have is 2.23, to be compared with the average fecundity rate in France which is 1.7 children per female (INSEE, 1999a : 30).

A large majority of the respondents agrees that work, individual accomplishment and family are important (76.3 %, 75.4 % and 73.7 %). They are more divided as far as the importance of friends is concerned (43.6 %). Finally, leisure (16.5 %), money and material goods (13.6 %), religion (10.2 %) and especially politics (7.2 %) receive less concern.

### Firm size, growth and perspectives

More than half of the respondents (57.2 %) think that their firm has a satisfactory size, but 79.7 % would like to develop it if they had the possibility to. The reasons they give is that they view growth as a goal (43.6 %) and that they seek to increase their market shares (31.4 %).

In the context of a development of the firm, only 27.5 % of the respondents would be ready to lose their control in capitalshare. Most of them would rather develop their firm through sales (60.6 %) and profitability increase (54.2 %). Less of them would either buy other firms (36.9 %) or create other businesses (28.8 %). Confirming Gray's proposal that employment growth is almost never a goal in itself (Gray, 1998), only 28.4 % of the respondents declare that they would develop the firm through an increase in the number of employees, while 36.9 % of the respondents have fixed an upper limit to their firm size at 40 employees in average. The average present number of employees is 39, what may explain the respondents' reluctance to develop their firm by these means. However, the average evolution of this figure over the past five years is + 41.1 % In more than half of the cases (58.5 %), this increase has been stable rather than erratic (34.3 %).

The average turnover in 1997 is reported at 39 million Francs, with a progression of + 35.2 % in five years. In 55.5 % of the cases, the evolution has been stable versus 34.7 % of erratic growth. The export turnover has increased from 6 % of the total turnover to 8.3 % over the same period. The average net result after taxes has also grown of 32.9 % in five years, standing now at 424.000 Francs. On the opposite, the net profitability has slightly decreased from 7.1 % down to 6.9 % over the period 1992-1997.



**Figure 6.5. – Business(es) performance figures**

	Present (1997 or 1998)	Growth over five years	Growth pattern
Number of employees	39	+ 41.1 %	quite stable
Turnover	39 million Francs	+ 35.2 %	quite stable
Export turnover	8.3 %	+ 38.3 %	---
Net result after taxes	424,000 Francs	+ 32.9 %	rather erratic
Net profitability	6.9 %	- 2.8 %	rather erratic

About one respondent out of four (25.9 %) declares that s/he runs a firm that encounters difficulties. This proportion of respondents reporting business-related problems suggests that not only owner-managers feeling that their firm is a success have answered to the questionnaire. The bias of receiving replies only from ‘successful’ owner-managers, if any, is thus of relatively low importance.

As far as the changes in the environment are concerned, most of the respondents declare that they rapidly adapt to (58.9 %), while 26.7 % anticipate the changes and only 4.2 % react once the changes are well established. Regarding the future, a large majority of the respondents declare rather or totally optimistic, for their personal future (78.8 %) and for their firm’s (72 %). This observation can be linked to the ‘overoptimism’ attribute of entrepreneurs, who prove to be most confident about their perceived chances of success (Cooper et al., 1988). It can also be related to the good French socio-economic climate by the time the survey was conducted (see section 7.4.2.).

### **Synthesis**

In average, the respondents are 47 years old, mostly male (80 %) with higher education (53 %). The sample is made of both entrepreneurial and non-entrepreneurial characters. Most of the respondents agree on the importance of work, individual accomplishment and family, while money and material goods, religion and politics receive less concern. Their familial environment mainly praised values

related to due effort and priority to work. One respondent's father out of three (36 %) already ran a business.

The respondents' average length of service is 13 years and 85 % of the respondents have been running the business for five years or more. Thus the majority of the respondents are expected to have less fluctuating levels of satisfaction than during the first years of operations and to be more able to reflect upon historic experiences to evaluate whether these are satisfying to them (Cooper and Artz, 1995: 441). These figures strengthen the validity of the respondents' answers to the questionnaire.

Almost half of the respondents have created their business, mainly in order to create and achieve something. Few of them have a previous experience as owner-managers (13 %) but 42 % are multiple business owner-managers.

They have high workloads, and declare that their personal life revolves around the business. Even though they recognise (84 %) that they face problems with the conflicting interests between work and private life, 76 % of them believe that a good combination is possible. Most of the respondents are globally happy with their present life (85 %), yet they are less satisfied with their income level.

The businesses are 29 years old and have 39 employees in average. One out of four encounters difficulties. The average evolution in turnover over the past five years is + 35 %, the net result after taxes has grown of + 33 % and the net profitability has remained stable with a slight decrease over the same period of time. Most of the respondents (80 %) would develop their firm if they had the possibility to. However, 37 % have fixed an upper limit to the number of employees. They would rather achieve growth through internal sales or profitability.

The respondents are globally optimistic regarding the firm's and their own future.



### 6.1.2. Visions of success

The elements given by the respondents to define professional, familial and personal success are described, as well as the relative importance they assess to each of these dimensions, in order to determine their global vision of success.

#### Definitions of professional, familial and personal success

As far as the professional dimension of success is concerned, the most frequent element of definition is to ensure the durability of the firm (21.9 %). Then the profitability of the firm and its development are favoured by 18.7 % and 17.8 % of the respondents. The other items are in decreasing order : employees' well being (12.4 %), job creation (8.5 %) and innovation (7.8 %). The elements less quoted by the respondents for professional success are 'to manage a firm with high sales volume' (1.8 %), 'to progress in terms of one's own career' (2.6 %), 'to be leader on the market' (3.5 %) and 'to ensure oneself a comfortable income' (4.2 %).

It appears that the most frequently selected definition elements relate directly to the firm's operations rather than to the benefits that could be induced for the owner-manager, the employees or the society as a whole. This observation suggests a strong commitment of the owner-managers to their businesses which they seem to consider as entities rather than means to take advantage of.

As far as the professional dimension of success is considered, the respondents define success in terms of the firm's durability, profitability or development, rather than considering the side benefits they could expect.

Regarding familial success, the stability and unity of the household (23.5 %) and the transmission of values to one's children (21.6 %) are crucial to many respondents. This observation confirms the importance of values already suggested in the interviews' findings (section 3). Then the shared leisure time (17.8 %) and the guarantee to earn the family's living (17.2 %) receive relatively important concern. On the opposite, the items : to constitute a patrimony for one's children (8.4 %) and to see one's children grow (10.5 %) do not define familial success for most of the respondents.

It is interesting to note that 14 % of the respondents notified that one of their initial motivation to become an owner-manager was to constitute a patrimony for their children. Less of them seem to consider this as part of their definition of familial success. The low proportion of respondents who chose the item 'to see one's children grow' may be explained by the reality of these owner-managers who do not have much time to dedicate to their children. During the interviews, it was observed that this generated a strong guilt feeling among small firms owner-managers. One of the owner-manager interviewed explained : « It is one thing to have a stable family life, it is another to have a flourishing one ». Another interviewee admitted that he felt guilty for not having seen his children grow, until a friend told him : « You haven't seen them grow, but they have seen you grow ».

As a synthesis, it seems that the respondents define familial success more in terms of having their children raised in a stable environment and transmitting them values, than being strongly present on their sides or providing them with a legacy.

The most frequently selected item to define personal success is the fidelity to one's principles (24.5 %). The importance of values and principles is thus observed in both the respondents' definitions of familial and personal success. To a lesser extent, the respondents also report their concern for ongoing learning (15.4 %) and undertaking new challenges (12.9 %). Both these items reflect a willingness for self-improvement and achievement. Financial comfort and the accomplishment of dreams are respectively quoted by 12.3 % and 11 % of the sample.

The less often quoted elements of definition for personal success are notoriety (2.4 %), having a peaceful and calm life (4.1 %), and contributing to the society (6.1 %). The low score obtained by social contribution reflects previous observations on the little concern expressed by the owner-managers for the socio-economic utility of their business. At least it can be suggested that most of them do not integrate this social role in their definition of personal success. The even lower score of notoriety is also similar to the observations made for the initial motivations of the respondents. It seems that the respondents, when defining personal success, are self-oriented rather than concerned with social recognition or their social role.



Perceived relative importance of each dimension in the respondents' global success

It may be interesting to first examine the respondents' perceptions on the importance of economic, political and familial concerns in decision making processes. The design of the related question : « What relative weight would you personally give to the following rationales, regarding the decision making for your firm ? » is derived from Bauer's work (1995) presented in section 2.3.1. The replies are presented in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6. – Relative weight of the economic, familial and political logic in the respondents' decision making

	Weight in the decision making process
Economic logic (maximising the profitability of the firm)	51.05 %
Familial logic (ensuring income and patrimony to your family)	29.76 %
Political logic (keeping and consolidating your power inside the firm)	19.19 %
Total	100.00 %

Priority is given by the respondents to the economic logic, but it is interesting to note the relative importance of familial aspects. Together with the political concerns, they represent almost half of the weights (49 %) in the respondents' decision-making processes. This finding provides first empirical support to the importance of non-economic concerns in decision making.

As far as visions of success are concerned, the relative importance of familial, professional and personal success in their global success were reported by the respondents as presented in Figure 6.7.

**Figure 6.7. – Relative importance of the familial, professional and personal dimensions in the respondents’ global success**

	Relative importance in global success
Familial dimension of success	37.80 %
Professional dimension of success	36.46 %
Personal dimension of success	25.74 %
Total	100.00 %

The professional dimension of success, even though it represents a large part at 36.46 %, is surprisingly not in a dominant position. The familial dimension overpasses it with a reported weight at 37.8 % within global success. Finally, the personal dimension of success accounts in average for 25.74 % of the respondents’ global success.

These results demonstrate the existence of a balanced relative importance (38 / 36 / 26) of the three dimensions within global success, as perceived by the respondents. Even though personal success receives lesser weight, none of the dimensions is neither underrated or predominant. The conceptualisation of success encompassing professional, familial and personal aspects is thus empirically legitimised. These observations also confirm that professional success is not sufficient when considering the owner-manager’s success. The understatement of the importance of familial and personal success would lead to the denial of 63.5 % of the elements taking part in the owner-manager’s global success.

**Perceived success achievement and Index for Global Success**

The global results on the respondents’ perceived success achievement confirm their general optimism with a good average level of perceived achievement for 80 % of them, while 21 % feel totally successful. It is also interesting to observe that half of the respondents (50.8 %) consider that their personal contribution in the success of the firm is essential.



In average, one respondent out of five (19.6 %) feel ‘not at all’ or ‘a little’ successful. This proportion confirms that there is no strong bias : as mentionned about respondents reporting difficulties for their firm, not only ‘successful’ repondents have replied to the questionnaire.

In Riffault’s study (1994), the satisfaction at work reported by the French population receives a mark of 6.78 out of ten. Satisfaction at home reaches 7.44 (Riffault, 1994). When referring to the respondents who declare that they are ‘totally’ successful, the present study confirms a higher level of perceived achievement in familial success (29.2 %) than in the professional dimension (20.3 %). Personal success is totally achieved for only 14.8 % of the respondents.

It is interesting to observe that the higher the reported importance of a dimension, the higher the proportion of respondents who feel totally successful in this dimension, as shown in Figure 6.8.

Figure 6.8. – Relative importance of and proportion of totally successful respondents in familial, professional and personal dimensions of success

	Relative importance (total being 100)	Totally successful respondents
Familial dimension of success	37.8 %	29.2 %
Professional dimension of success	36.5 %	20.3 %
Personal dimension of success	25.7 %	14.8 %

The coherence observed in dimension rankings suggests that some logics and coherence exist within the respondents’ replies and thus supports the validity of the questionnaires.

The Index for Global Success calculation method combines these two elements : relative importance and perceived achievement in each dimension. The respondents’ IGS scores are calculated according to the method described in section 5. The average score is 207.06, however some variations are observed around this average. A comparison between low IGS- and high IGS- respondents (‘high- and low success perceivers’) is conducted in section 6.3.

### 6.1.3. Synthesis and conclusion

It could have been argued that only 'successful' owner-managers would reply to the survey. The proportion of respondents reporting business-related difficulties or a low level of perceived success achievement suggest that there is no strong bias in the replies received to the questionnaires.

The main conclusion which can be drawn from these general results, is that they provide empirical support to the integration of non-economic aspects when considering individuals' success. They demonstrate that the respondents give a high importance to familial and personal concerns beyond the professional dimension in their own success. This balance between professional, familial and personal success also validates the conceptual framework designed to study success as a three-dimensional concept.

The research questions and their related findings can be synthesised as follows :

#### *Q.2 - How do the respondents define professional, personal and familial success ?*

Globally, the respondents did not report strong concern for money and materialistic aspects of success. As far as the professional dimension of success is considered, the respondents define success in terms of the firm's durability, profitability or development, rather than considering the side benefits they could take advantage of. They define familial success more in terms of having their children raised in a stable environment and transmitting them values, than being strongly present on their sides or providing them with a legacy. The importance of values and principles is observed both in the respondents' definitions of familial and personal success. When defining personal success, the respondents seem to be rather self-oriented than concerned with social recognition or their social role.

#### *Q.3 - Which relative weight do they give to each of these dimensions ?*

It is found that the familial (38 %), professional (36 %) and personal dimensions (26 %) receive balanced weights within the respondents' global success, supporting the hypothesis that success is a three-dimensional concept and supporting the importance of non-professional elements when considering small firms owner-managers' success.



*Q.4 - How do they perceive their own achievement in each dimension of success ?*

More respondents feel that they are totally successful as far as familial success is concerned (29 %), while less of them perceive successful in the professional (20 %) and personal dimensions (15 %). It is observed that the higher the importance given to the dimension, the higher the proportion of respondents who feel totally successful in that dimension. This finding supports the use of the IGS evaluation method.

*Q.5 – What is the importance of non-economic concerns in the respondents' visions of success ?*

Together with the political concerns, familial aspects represent almost half of the weights in the respondents' decision-making processes (49 %), revealing the importance of the socio-psychological patterns of small business owner-managers. Moreover, non-professional elements account for 64 % in their global success. The understatement of familial and personal dimensions would thus lead to the omission of a great part of the individual's success.

These observations provide strong empirical support to the importance of non economic concerns and the need to integrate extra-professional elements in the study of small firms owner-managers' success and attitudes.

## 6.2. EXPLORING GENDER-BASED COMPARATIVE VISIONS OF SUCCESS

Two subsamples have been created on the basis of the respondents' gender. The male group gathers 188 respondents and accounts for 79.7 % of the sample. Female respondents are 48, what represents 20.3 % of the total number of respondents. The main differences that emerge between the two groups on their general characteristics and profiles are described. Descriptive statistics on their respective visions of success are then presented in order to explore the following research question :

*Q.6. Do male and female respondents' visions of success differ?* The elements of personal and familial life are finally investigated to highlight the results on males' and females' visions of success. It is mentionned when significant differences are observed through the use of Khi2 and Fisher tests, as well as through average comparisons.

### 6.2.1. Groups of respondents' respective characteristics and profiles

The average age of the respondents is 47.3 for males and 45 for females. Females' length of service is significantly lower than males' (9.5 versus 13.5 years). This variable discriminates among the two groups according to the Fisher test ( $F = 7.69$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ). On the other hand, female respondents have a higher level of education : 58.4 % have studied after the Baccalauréat (A-level) versus 51.1 % of the males. The Khi2 test also reveals that females have lived their student years in a significantly more positive way (45.8 % versus 23.4 % of the males).

Females have more often inherited their firms by familial transmission (33.3 % versus 27.1 % for males), while male respondents have more created their firm (49.5 % versus 43.8 %) or bought it (24.5 % versus 22.9 %). During the past five years, a higher proportion of males have created or bought other firms (32.4 % and 37.8 % versus 20.8 % and 27.1 % for females). Moreover, the Fisher test and the average comparisons underline that they have done so for a significantly higher number of firms : 1.7 firms bought or created over five years versus 1.1 for females. Males are also more experienced in running a business (23.9 % have run a business before versus 14.6 % of females). However, both groups have most an 'employee-type'-oriented professional background



(60.6 % for males and 64.6 % for females). They also presently run other businesses in similar proportions (49.5 % and 50 %).

As a synthesis, female respondents have a higher education level than males, but the latter are more experienced in creating and running businesses.

A significantly higher proportion of the firms run by female respondents operate in manufacturing and transports, while comparatively more firms run by male respondents operate in constructions and retail trade. This should however not be seen as typical of the French situation in absolute figures. The firms run by females employ in average 27.85 employees, versus 41.81 for the male groups' firms. The number of employees appears to be a discriminating variable among the two groups ( $F = 4.56$ ,  $p = 0.032$ ). The observation of these figures' evolution over the past five years indicates a higher increase for the male group (+43.2 % versus +30.7 %). The turnover and its growth reported by males are also consequently higher (+37.14 % for 40.7 MF versus +28.2 % for 32.8 MF). The part of the export in the turnover has also grown more for the male group (+42.9 % versus +26.5 %) but it remains lower than females' (12.2 % versus 7.5 %). The net result after taxes is higher for males' firms, but the evolution is quite similar for both groups (+39.9 % and +35.5 %). The net profitability for the male group is 7.21 versus 4.71 for females' firms. Both groups have experienced a negative evolution over the past five years, which is much more sensible for the female group (-18.9 % versus -0.7 %). 29.2 % of female respondents declare running a business that encounters difficulties, versus 25 % of the male group.

Some 68.8 % of the female group think that their firm's size is sufficient, versus 54.2 % of males, even though females run smaller firms than males. However, females would be willing to develop their firm if they had the capacity to, in similar proportions than males (81.3 % versus 79.2 %).

When asked about the way they would develop the firm, both groups privilege an internal growth of sales and increase in profitability (61.2 % and 53.7% of the males, 58.3 % and 56.3 % of the females). More males think of acquiring other firms (38.3 % versus 31.3 %). Some differences also appear regarding the increase of the number of employees which seems to be preferred by more females (39.6 %) than males (25.5 %). It is interesting to observe that in the same time, more females have fixed a limit to the number of employees (43.8 % versus 35.1 %). This apparent

paradox may be explained by the difference in firm size run by males and females. It may also be that female respondents are more willing to control the time they spend in their firm.

While both groups are optimistic regarding the future for themselves (79.3 % of the males and 77.1 % of the females), it is less so as far as the firm's future is concerned : 73.4 % of the males remain optimistic, but the proportion of females decreases to 66.7 %. The negative evolution of their firm's profitability in the past five years may explain this less optimistic attitude.

As a synthesis, females run smaller businesses, with a lower profitability which has been decreasing for five years. They seem to be less growth-oriented and less optimistic about their firm's future than male respondents.

Differences between male and female respondents can also be observed in their initial motivations to become owner-managers. More male owner-managers select the item 'to create and achieve something' than females (+ 18.9 %) and going into business seems to be for significantly more of them motivated by the 'accomplishment of a dream'. More pragmatically, independence and financial gain are also quoted by more male respondents (+ 11.2 %). Finally, they quote in significantly higher proportions the motivation 'to grasp a business opportunity' and 'to market one's idea', suggesting more business-oriented initial motivations than females.

The latter, according to the Khi2 tests, praise very significantly more often the ongoing learning process as an initial motivation (+ 13.4 %). Even though less significantly, they also quote more often the familial tradition (+ 10.9 %).

As far as their personal income is concerned, the Khi2 tests reveal that female respondents feel satisfied in very significantly lower proportions than males (58.3 % versus 66.5 %). For the same revenue, only 12.5 % of them would prefer to work for a large firm, versus 14.9 % for male. This observation is confirmed by the proportion of females who think that the revenue they get from the firm is under-estimated with reference to the work they achieve : 52.1 % versus 43.1 % of the male group. An explanation can be found in the striking difference between female respondents' reported average annual income at FF 327,350 and the male group's significantly higher report at FF 504,600. All professions considered, the gap between males' and females' wages stood at – 21.4 %



in 1993 (Bernard, 1994). These results suggest that the gap between males' and females' income has not decreased and may be larger among small firms owner-managers.

Despite these sources of dissatisfaction for female owner-managers, all things considered, approximately 85 % of both groups declare quite or totally happy, even though males give their global life satisfaction a slightly higher mark (7.13 out of ten) than females (6.9). As a synthesis, female owner-managers report more difficulties and sources of dissatisfaction than male respondents. However, their global appreciations are almost similar to males' reported levels of satisfaction.

As far as their familial background is concerned, a very significantly lower proportion of females report that priority was given to work, whilst there seemed to be a stronger concern for family than in male respondents' familial environments. According to the Khi2 tests, the priority given to work by the respondents' family during childhood discriminates among the two groups.

Females also report a more financially comfortable situation (22.9 % versus 13.3 %), and a more religious, less politically engaged environment (35.4 % and 8.3 % versus 21.3 % and 15.4 %). Female also report a more 'protected' childhood (31.3 % versus 21.3 %), with more taste for security and comfort (14.6 % versus 7.4 %), even though 39.6 % of them also quote the individual responsibility as an important component of the education they received (versus 30.9 % for the male group). Female respondents seem to have been brought up with more dialogue (29.2 % versus 16.5 %), and free exchange of the ideas than male (14.6 % versus 8 %). Finally, female respondents come from a family that travelled more (20.8 % versus 15.4 %) and was more often a re-structured family (16.7 % versus 8.5 %). Female respondents' fathers and mothers were more often owner-managers : 39.6 % and 12.5 % versus 34.6 % and 3.2 % for the male group.

Many differences can be observed between male and female groups as far as their familial background is concerned. It is argued that these differences may be considered as consequences of the respondents' social gender identity : young girls may be educated in a relatively more flexible and favoured manner than boys (financial comfort, protected childhood, security and comfort, dialogue and free exchange of ideas) and may thus have perceived their childhood in a more positive way than their male counterparts, reporting then 'softer' appreciations.

Both 75.5 % males and 79.2 % females agree on the importance of work values. The difference is much more visible on family and personal accomplishment : 87.5 % of the female respondents totally agree that both are important, versus 70.2 % and 72.3 % of the male group. Some 50% of the female group also agree regarding the importance of friends, versus 42 % of male respondents. On the opposite, more male respondents confirm the importance they give to money and material goods : 16 % versus 4.2 % for females. Leisure receives similar support. Finally, religion and politics are supported by more males than female respondents : 11.2 % and 8 % versus 6.3 % and 4.2 %. Even though these results may be slightly biased by the female propensity to agree more on the importance of the various items (42.2 % of 'totally agrees' in average versus 38.9 % for males), the most striking result is the much higher proportion of female respondents who totally agree on the importance of family and personal accomplishment, suggesting a stronger concern for these elements than males.



Synthesis

The main differences in background and profile of the two groups are summarised in Figure 6.9.

Figure 6.9. – Main differences in the background and profile of the male and the female groups

	Female group	Male group
Education and professional background	Higher educational level	More experienced in creating and running businesses
Firm size, growth and perspectives	Significantly smaller businesses Lower, decreasing profitability Less growth-oriented Less optimistic for their firm's future	
Initial motivations to become owner-managers	Ongoing learning processes Familial tradition	To create and achieve something More business-oriented motivations : independence, financial gain, to grasp an opportunity, to market one's idea
Income and satisfaction	Lower income and related satisfaction Similar levels of <i>global</i> satisfaction	
Familial background	More flexible and 'favoured' education More parents owner-managers	More priority given to work
Values systems	Family Personal accomplishment	Money and material goods

As a synthesis, female respondents have a higher education level than males, but the latter are more experienced in creating and running businesses. Males run significantly larger businesses and seem to be more growth-oriented and more optimistic about their firm's future.

As far as initial motivations and values are concerned, females appear to be relatively more family-oriented and to give more importance to personal accomplishment than males. The latter appear to be more materialistic (financial gain, money and material goods) and challenges-oriented (creation and achievement, independence). While reporting lower incomes, females declare similar levels of global satisfaction than males, which may suggest that money is no strong determinant for females' global satisfaction.

### 6.2.2. Comparative visions of success

#### Definitions of professional, familial and personal success

The elements selected by male and female respondents to define professional, familial and personal success are compared on the basis of the replies frequency. The most relevant relative differences are presented.

As far as professional success is concerned, only slight differences are observed between males and females. A high proportion of respondents in both groups select the durability of the firm (21.7 % and 22.9 %), and its profitability (19 % and 17.3 %). In the third position, the development of the firm is slightly more supported by males (18.3 %) than females (15.9 %). On the other hand, the employees' well-being is a somewhat stronger concern for female respondents (14.5 % versus 11.9 %), while males give a higher importance to earnings and career than females, even though in low proportions (4.8 % and 3 % versus 2 % and 1.3 %).

The gaps between male and female respondents are more visible as far as the familial dimension of success is concerned. The transmission of values to their children is praised by more females (26.3 % versus 20.4 %). They also give more support to the item sharing the leisure time (20.8 % versus 17 %). On the other hand, the male group is more concerned with the household stability and unity (24 % versus 21.5 %) and ensuring the family's living, which is generally accepted as a more masculine role (18.2 % versus 13.1 %).

The most relevant difference regarding personal success occurs on the item 'to constantly learn through new experiences and contacts' which is selected by more females (21.6 %) than males (13.9 %) -it is interesting to observe that the ongoing learning process was also one of the initial motivations reported by females. Both groups place in the first position the fidelity to one's principles (24.4 % for males versus 25.1 %). Female respondents seem to define personal success less through financial comfort and new challenges (9 % and 11.1 % versus 13.1 % and 13.3 %). Males also give more importance to the available leisure time (10.8 % versus 7.6 %).



Figure 6.10. – Main elements in the definitions of professional, familial and personal success by males and females

	Female group	Male group
Professional success	Employees well being	Development of the firm Earnings Career
Familial success	Transmitting values to one's children Sharing leisure time	Stability and unity of the household Ensuring the family's living
Personal success	Constant learning through new experiences and contacts	Financial comfort Experiencing new challenges Available leisure time

While males seem to define all the dimensions of success in a more pragmatic and materialistic way , females have a higher propension to select elements in relation with the individual development and accomplishment. This can be related to the conclusions drawn by Slipowitz (1992). She emphasises the fact that women express success more with words such as happiness, satisfaction and personal growth rather than money, fame or prestige. Some differences can also be observed as far as the way the respondents express success is concerned : males quote new challenges when females select new contacts and experiences, which both relate to a continuous learning process. The male group also selects the item ‘available leisure time’ for personal success whereas females place it in the familial dimension.

Perceived relative importance of each dimension in the respondents’ global success

The relative importance of the economic, political and familial logics (Bauer, 1995) in male and female respondents’ decision making processes is presented in Figure 6.11.

**Figure 6.11. – Relative importance of the economic, political and familial logics in males' and females' decision making**

	<b>Female group</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Male group</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
Economic logic	55.03 %	18.77	50.04 %	19.82
Political logic	17.36 %	9.69	19.66 %	13.48
Familial logic	27.61 %	15.8	30.30 %	17.47
Total	100 %		100 %	

It is interesting to note that, even though they run less profitable firms, female respondents give a higher relative importance to the economic logic (maximising the profit) than the male group. It may be argued that women owner-managers need to affirm their economic concerns more strongly than males to gain legitimacy in a highly masculine world. Subsequently, the political logic (keeping the control and power within the firm) and the familial logic (ensuring one's family's living and patrimony) are given a higher importance by male owner-managers.

As far as the relative importance of professional, familial and personal dimensions in the respondents' global success is concerned, the results stand as follows :

**Figure 6.12. – Relative importance of the professional, familial and personal dimensions in males' and females' global success**

	<b>Female group</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Male group</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
Familial dimension of success	36.79 %	14.3	38.05 %	13.77
Professional dimension of success	35.33 %	11.12	36.75 %	13.32
Personal dimension of success	27.88 %	10.75	25.20 %	11.24
Total	100 %		100 %	



Female respondents appear to give more importance to personal success than males (+ 2.68 %), while the latter consequently report a slightly stronger concern for familial and professional success (+ 1.26 % and + 1.42 %). It is surprising to note that the familial dimension does not receive stronger importance by women, even though it remains for both groups the most important dimension of success. Globally, the gaps between the two groups remain quite low for all the dimensions.

#### Perceived success achievement and Index for Global Success

The gender-based difference is particularly visible as far as personal success is concerned. More female respondents perceive themselves as totally successful in the personal dimension : for 100 women, only 43 men report personal success achievement. It is observed through the Fisher test that the coefficient associated with the reported level of personal satisfaction discriminates among the two groups ( $F = 6.08$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ). As far as professional and familial success are concerned, the differences are less striking. A slightly higher proportion of female respondents report that they have achieved professional success, while males feel more so in the familial dimension. It is interesting to note that these trends are in the opposite of the social identity stereotypes which suggest that females are more 'successful' in family matters whilst males are more 'successful' at the professional level. This observation may reflect a change in the minds and the search of both male and female respondents for a legitimacy in other spheres than the ones traditionally associated with their gender identity.

**Figure 6.13. – Proportion of totally successful males and females in and relative importance of familial, professional and personal dimensions of success**

	Proportion of totally successful respondents		Relative importance of each dimension (total being 100)	
	Male group	Female group	Male group	Female group
Personal dimension of success	11.7 %	27.1 %	25.20 %	27.88 %
Familial dimension of success	29.8 %	27.1 %	38.05 %	36.79 %
Professional dimension of success	19.7 %	22.9 %	36.75 %	35.33 %
<i>Average</i>	<i>20.4 %</i>	<i>25.7 %</i>		

It is observed that the success perceptions of males and females are not in total concordance with the relative importance they give to each dimension of success. Even though male respondents combine their higher weight with their higher proportion of successful respondents in familial success, regarding personal and professional dimensions they experience a strong discrepancy between the weight they assess to this dimension and their reported level of achievement. These gaps will tend to considerably reduce their Index for Global Success.

The differences between males and females may be explained by the higher propension of female respondents to report high levels of success achievement : in average for all three dimensions, 25.7 % women versus 20.4 % men feel totally successful.

As a consequence, it appears that male respondents have a lower average Index for Global Success at 205.65, while females’ IGS stands at 212.58. The higher IGS score of the female group may be explained by the higher importance they give to personal success, and their related higher proportion of successful reports, which are combined in the calculation of the IGS score. It is interesting to remind that Cooper and Artz (1995) found that entrepreneurs with non economic goals reported higher levels of satisfaction with their business. They also revealed that female entrepreneurs were more satisfied with business ownership. Both these statements find empirical support in the present findings, which suggest that females have more non economic aspirations and



report higher levels of satisfaction. It may be argued that in a highly male-dominated environment, females experience an even greater sense of achievement.

### Work and private life

Females seem to spend less working hours a week. According to the Fisher test, the number of hours worked weekly is a discriminating variable ( $F = 12.86$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Females report an average 51.72 hours worked week, versus 59.13 hours for males. This tends to confirm females' concern for a more important personal life outside the firm. They also have a much better perception of their family lives flourishing. A striking result is provided by the respondents' perceptions on their family life : 83.3 % females versus 68.1 % males declare that it is flourishing, even though both groups recognise that their lives revolve around the firm (according to 79.2 % females versus 84.5 % males).

Yet, more females perceive the difficulties encountered in combining work, family and personal lives. 87.5 % females versus 83.5 % in the male group admit that they sometimes face conflicts between their personal, familial and professional priorities. This trend is confirmed by the fact that 42.6 % of males think that one can combine familial and professional success as an owner-manager, versus 35.4 % of the female respondents.

It must be kept in mind that 27.1% of the female respondents are divorced or re-married, versus 12.2 % of the males. This element may have enhanced females' concern to preserve their personal lives, while their lower number of children (1.91 in average versus 2.32) may provide an explanation for their relatively lower concern for familial aspects. The Fisher test results underline the discriminating power of this variable ( $F = 4.85$ ,  $p = 0.027$ ).

### 6.2.3. Synthesis and conclusion

It must be noted that France is ranked with a masculinity index of 43 and a 36<sup>th</sup> position according to Hofstede's work on nations' culture (1991). As far as the national dimensions as defined by Hofstede are concerned, France is characterised by a high need for security and recognition, a high

risk control and a dominance of feminine culture. This may introduce some bias in the findings and thus reduce the differences observed between male and female respondents.

The research question *Q.6. Do male and female respondents' visions of success differ?* related findings can be synthesised as follows.

As a synthesis, female respondents have a higher education level than males, but the latter are more experienced in creating and running businesses. Males run significantly larger businesses and seem to be more growth-oriented and more optimistic about their firm's future. Females report a relatively more flexible and favoured education and familial environment than males, for whom priority was significantly more often given to work. Their familial background as an incentive for self employment seems to be stronger than males' : female respondents' parents were more often owner-managers, they have more often inherited the business through familial transmission, and familial tradition is more often quoted by females as an initial motivation to go into business. As far as initial motivations and values are concerned, females also appear to give more importance to personal accomplishment than males, who seem to be more materialistic and business-oriented. Whilst females report significantly lower levels of personal income, money seems to be no strong determinant for their global satisfaction towards life.

While males define all the dimensions of success in a more pragmatic and materialistic way , females have a higher propension to select elements in relation with individual development and accomplishment. In their decision making process, female respondents give a higher relative importance to the economic logic (maximising the profit) than the male group. It may be argued that women owner-managers need to affirm their economic concerns more strongly than males in order to gain legitimacy. A slightly higher proportion of female respondents also report that they have totally achieved professional success, but the most significant difference lies in the much higher proportion of females reporting personal achievement, even though they show a general propension to report higher levels of total success achievement in all three dimensions. Females also give more importance to personal success than males, whilst the familial dimension is given slightly stronger importance by males who also report relatively higher familial success achievement.



Female respondents have a higher Index for Global Success than males, what may be explained by their higher scores in personal success in relation with its perceived importance.

This higher concern of females for personal matters is highlighted by the fact that they report significantly less working hours a week. They also have a much better perception of their family lives flourishing. Yet, more females perceive the difficulties encountered in combining work, family and personal lives. Some 27% of the female respondents are divorced or re-married, versus 12 % of the males. This may enhance females' concern to preserve their personal lives, while their lower number of children may explain their relatively lower concern for familial aspects.

6.3. HIGH- AND LOW SUCCESS PERCEIVERS : HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The research hypothesis to be tested in this section is the following :

*H.7 – High success perceivers also report higher levels of business performance and global satisfaction.*

The visions of success of high- and low success perceivers are described, and their general characteristics are examined in order to determine whether differences emerge. High- and low success perceivers are identified on the basis of their IGS score. The Index for Global Success (IGS) was described and defined in section 5 as the weighted sum of levels of perceived success achievement for each dimension :  $IGS = (W_{pr} * S_{pr}) + (W_{fa} * S_{fa}) + (W_{pe} * S_{pe})$  , where the variable W represents the relative importance (%) given by the respondents to each dimension of success (pr = professional, fa = familial, pe = personal) and the variable S represents the level of perceived achievement for each dimension. A calculated variable named IGS has been created in the database for each respondent, based on the relative importance given to each dimension , and the perceived success achievement coefficients. The global results and distribution of the sample according to the respondents' scores stand as follows :

Figure 6.14. – The IGS variable – Global results and sample scores

Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Respondents
207.064	0	300	236

IGS : ( $\geq$ ) 0 , ( $<$ ) 201	150 respondents	63.6 %	=> low success perceivers
IGS : ( $\geq$ ) 201 , ( $<$ ) 301	86 respondents	36.4 %	=> high success perceivers

The initial sample is divided into two subsamples according to the respondents' IGS scores around the mean. A special question is integrated in the database to classify the respondents in each group. The subsamples are referred to as hIGS (high success perceivers) and lIGS (low success perceivers). Significance tests are conducted through Khi2 tests, Fisher test and average comparisons. It is mentionned when the differences observed are significant or discriminate among the two groups.



### 6.3.1. High- and low success perceivers' backgrounds

The proportion of male and female in both groups follows the 80/20 ratio, with a slightly higher rate of female owner-manager in the hIGS respondents (22.1 % versus 19.3 %). High success perceivers are older than lIGS : 48 years old versus 46, age being discriminant according to the Fisher test ( $F = 4.06$ ,  $p = 0.043$ ). High success perceivers have a significantly lower educational level than lIGS : 54.7 % hIGS have the Baccalauréat (A-Level) or less, versus 41.3 % of the lIGS. Beyond the differences in the level of education, it is interesting to note that both hIGS and lIGS report positive feelings about their school and college years, which were good for around 75.9 % of them.

High success perceivers' length of service is significantly higher (15.16 versus 11.24 years), and they have significantly more created their firms (56.3 %) than lIGS (41.9 %). The latter have in equal proportions bought it and inherited it by familial transmission (28.4 % versus 14.9 % and 26.4 % respectively for the hIGS).

A larger proportion of low success perceivers' fathers were already running a business (40% versus 27.9 %). They also recognise a higher influence of their parents' profession on their decision to become an owner-manager, even though their role is globally important for both groups. Regarding their relatives' help, hIGS report moral support, while for lIGS the help was more business-oriented, through the transmission of the firm or professional contacts. However, more lIGS also received no particular help from their relatives (21 % versus 17.7 %). High- and low success perceivers' familial backgrounds do not show many differences : hIGS were raised in a slightly more urban environment (36 % versus 26 %) with less priority given to work (32.6 % versus 38 %) but with a higher concern for the value of effort (59.3 % versus 52.7 %) and for individual responsibility (36 % versus 30.7 %).

More low success perceivers have run a business before (25.3 % versus 16.3 %) and declare that their professional background was mainly made as an owner-manager (35.3 % versus 33.7 %). Around 30 % of both high- and low success perceivers have bought another firm during the past five years, however the results differ as far as the creation of other firm(s) during the past five years is concerned : 40.7 % of the hIGS can be categorised as recidivists, versus 32.7 % for the lIGS.

Moreover, 51.2 % of high success perceivers are currently running another firm, versus 48.7 % for the IIGS, and they have been running it for a longer period than IIGS.

6.3.2. Relative importance of each dimension and levels of success achievement

The weights given by the respondents to each dimension of success take part in the calculation process of the Index for Global Success. The description of the data in Figure 6.15. thus aims only at providing a more detailed description of the two groups of respondents.

Figure 6.15. – Relative importance of the familial, professional and personal dimensions in high and low success perceivers’ global success

	High success perceivers	standard deviation	Low success perceivers	standard deviation
Familial dimension of success	40.03 %	13.54	36.51 %	13.92
Professional dimension of success	36.48 %	12.13	36.45 %	13.35
Personal dimension of success	23.49 %	10.56	27.03 %	11.34
Total	100 %		100 %	

While the ranking of the three dimensions in order of importance is the same for both groups, high success perceivers appear to give higher importance to familial success. The importance given to personal success discriminates among the two groups according to the Fisher test ( $F = 5.61$ ,  $p = 0.018$ ). The professional dimension of success is given a similar weight by both groups of respondents.

The relative importance of the economic, political and familial logics (Bauer, 1995) can also be observed for the two groups in order to provide information on the relative importance of these logics in the owner-managers’ decisional process. These data are not integrated in the Index for Global Success but they complement previous information. The results are presented in Figure 6.16.



Figure 6.16. – Relative importance of the economic, political and familial logics in high and low success perceivers’ decision making

	High success perceivers	standard deviation	Low success perceivers	standard deviation
Economic logic	50.84 %	19.78	51.17 %	19.66
Political logic	18.82 %	13.05	19.39 %	12.71
Familial logic	30.33 %	15.96	29.43 %	17.85
Total	100 %		100 %	

No significant differences appear between high- and low success perceivers. HIGS seem to place a little more concern on the familial logic, while LIGS give slightly more importance to the economic and political logic when making decisions. The ranking order of the three logics is the same for both groups. As far as the decisional process is concerned, high- and low success perceivers integrate economic, familial and political aspects in the same proportions.

The levels of perceived success achievement in each dimension of success is compared for high- and low success perceivers in Figure 6.17.

Figure 6.17. – Proportion of totally successful high and low success perceivers in familial, professional and personal dimensions of success

	Proportion of totally successful respondents	
	High success perceivers	Low success perceivers
Familial dimension of success	74.4 %	3.3 %
Professional dimension of success	51.2 %	2.7 %
Personal dimension of success	40.7 %	0.0 %

The respondents' level of success achievement is integrated in the evaluation of the IGS score, what explains that large gaps are observed as far as the 'totally' successful replies are observed. The combination of 'totally' and 'quite' successful respondents thus provides more balanced results.

**Figure 6.18. – Proportion of totally and quite successful high and low success perceivers in familial, professional and personal dimensions of success**

	Proportion of totally and quite successful respondents	
	High success perceivers	Low success perceivers
Familial dimension of success	91.8 %	66.6 %
Professional dimension of success	97.7 %	79.7 %
Personal dimension of success	94.2 %	66.7 %

While the perception of low success perceivers logically remains well below the levels reported by hIGS, they report slightly better success achievement for professional success than for personal and familial dimensions.

**6.3.3. Professional success and related issues**

As far as professional success is concerned, lIGS seem to be more concerned with the profitability of their firm (19.9 % versus 16.7 %). On the other side, hIGS are more concerned with its durability (24 % versus 20.8 %) and its development (19.4 % versus 17 %). It seems that low success perceivers define professional success through a short term, vital element for the firm, while hIGS feel more concerned with long term perspectives. These findings, which may reflect a relatively higher confidence of hIGS as far as professional success is concerned, can be related to the firm's results, which prove to be better for high success perceivers than for lIGS.

The number of employees discriminates high and low success perceivers ( $F = 9.83, p = 0.002$ ). High success perceivers' firms employ 49.8 employees versus 32.8 for lIGS firms. A highly



significant majority at 71 % of high success perceivers think that their firm has a sufficient size, versus 49.4 % for the lIGS group. Though, hIGS appear to be more development-oriented than low success perceivers, what confirms the definition they give for professional success. If they had the opportunity to develop their firm, hIGS declare more willing to do so than lIGS (62.8 % versus 55.3 %). LIGS would develop their business in order to increase their market shares, whereas hIGS' concern is rather to follow their competitors. More lIGS have fixed an upper limit to the firm's number of employees (40 % versus 31.4 %) and the reported limit discriminates between hIGS and lIGS : 49.8 versus 35.6 employees ( $F = 4.94$ ,  $p = 0.027$ ). Beyond these differences, both lIGS and hIGS are reluctant to lose majority in capital in the case of the development of the firm (60 % and 58.1 %).

Turnover, export turnover and net result after taxes are higher for hIGS. As far as growth over the past five years is concerned, these register higher growth rates for number of employees, export turnover and net result after taxes. The rate of growth for turnover is quite similar for both groups, which indicates a much higher relative growth for hIGS. The net profitability presents low differences : 7.15 for hIGS versus 6.8 for lIGS. However, the evolution of this profitability is positive for hIGS : + 33.15 % while it is negative for low success perceivers : -13.6 %.

A significantly higher proportion of hIGS also report a good level of satisfaction regarding their personal income : 74.4 % declare quite or totally satisfied, versus 59.3 % of the lIGS respondents. Logically, lIGS also complain more that the income they receive from the firm is under-estimated with regards to the work they achieve. It is interesting to compare these perceptions with the income declared by the respondents. The average annual income for hIGS is 507.2 KF versus 448.9 KF for lIGS. Their perceptions thus seem to reflect an actual difference in income levels.

lIGS report more difficulties regarding their firms : 31.3 % declare they have temporary or serious problems, versus 16.3 % for the hIGS. This may be explained by the sectors of operations of their firms : lIGS run more businesses in manufacturing (26.7 % versus 16.3 %) or construction and

public works (12.7 % versus 9.3 %), while hIGS are more present in the services sector (32.6 % versus 20.7 %).

All these results reveal a higher state of dissatisfaction as far as professional aspects are concerned for the lIGS. As a consequence, even for a similar income, 30 % of the lIGS would be in varying degrees tempted to work for a large firm, versus only 16.3 % of the hIGS respondents. However, regarding the firm's future, a large majority of respondents in both groups feel optimistic (70.9 % for hIGS and 72.6 % for lIGS). Some 81.4 % of the hIGS respondents declare optimistic as far as their personal future is concerned, versus 77.4 % for the lIGS.

#### 6.3.4. Familial success, work and private life

Regarding familial success, the elements quoted by the two groups differ on various items. High success perceivers privilege the household stability and unity (24.8 %) and the transmission of values to one's children (24.4 %). To a lesser extent, they also quote more often the constitution of a patrimony to transmit (which is also the case as far as their initial motivations to become owner-managers are concerned).

Low success perceivers' replies provide the same ranks to the first two elements, but in a lower proportion (respectively 22.7 % and 20 %). On the opposite, more lIGS select the items 'sharing leisure time' (18.9 % versus 15.9 %) and 'ensuring one's family's living' (18.7 % versus 14.7 %) as elements of definition for familial success. Seeing one's children grow is also of slightly more importance to low success perceivers.

More of them report that they often face conflicts between their personal, familial and professional priorities (28.7 % versus 22.1 % in the hIGS group). 18.6 % of the hIGS declare that they never face such conflicts (versus 10.7 %). High success perceivers also report a much better perception of their family life, as 82.5 % of them declare that it is 'quite' or 'totally' flourishing, versus 64.7 % for the lIGS group. The Khi2 test proves that this difference is significant between high and low success perceivers. Yet hIGS also declare that their life revolves around the firm in a slightly more



important proportion than IIGS (86.1 % versus 82 %). The issue ‘do you think that an owner-manager can combine familial and professional success ?’ significantly discriminates between high and low success perceivers : 89.6 % of the hIGS think it is possible, versus only 68.6 % for the IIGS respondents. It is interesting to observe that 91.9 % of the hIGS respondents are married, while only 70 % of the IIGS group are. The Khi2 test proves that the difference is significant between high and low success perceivers .12 % of the IIGS are divorced and 8.7 % are single (versus 4.7 % and 1.2 % for the hIGS).

The hIGS group shows a higher level of respondents who totally agree on the importance of work (84.9 %) than IIGS (71.3 %). High success perceivers however also agree more on the importance of friends (+ 10 %) and family (+ 8.4 %). Even though high success perceivers have a general tendency to agree more on the importance of the various items listed (43 % in average versus 37.6 % for IIGS), these differences remain important.

It appears that high success perceivers report less conflicts between personal, familial and professional priorities, that they perceive their family life as more flourishing, and that they place higher importance on work, family and friends than IIGS. Even though their life revolves more around the firm, more hIGS think that an owner-manager can combine professional and familial life. High success perceivers are married in higher proportions than IIGS, which may be the result of a better balance between work and private life, or the reason why they report more confidence on their private life. Globally, it can be concluded that high success perceivers have a better state of satisfaction regarding their private life and its combination with work than IIGS.

#### 6.3.5. Personal success, initial motivations and global satisfaction

As far as personal success is concerned, the replies of both groups are quite similar in proportions and ranking orders. They place in the first position the item ‘to follow one’s own principles and values’ as the main element to define personal success (25.5 % for hIGS and 24.1 % for IIGS), followed by ongoing learning through new contacts and experiences (14.9 % and 15.8 %).

Within their three most important initial motivations, 'to create and achieve something' is the most often quoted item by both groups, followed, also in similar proportions, by the need for independence. The first difference appears on the third position : personal accomplishment is more often quoted by high success perceivers. They also report a significantly higher concern for the constitution of a patrimony to transmit to one's children (sixth global position) and for their civic and social duty (even though in a low position).

On the other hand, IIGS more often quote the familial tradition as an initial motivation (fourth position). They also declare higher initial motivation due to their taste for challenge (fifth position). It is interesting to note that more IIGS quote 'circumstances and chance', even though in a very low proportion (14th position).

Both groups report a combination of familial motivations and personal ones in their initial decision to become an owner-manager : high success perceivers with a higher preference for personal accomplishment and patrimony constitution, and low success perceivers with familial tradition and taste for challenge.

When asked whether their initial motivations to become owner-managers have been achieved, hIGS report significantly higher rates of satisfaction : 68.6 % report a total achievement, versus only 35.3 % for the IIGS group. The Khi2 test proves that the difference is significant between high and low success perceivers as far as the perceived achievement of their initial motivations is concerned.

More generally, high success perceivers declare that they are totally happy, all things considered, at 33.7 % versus 21.3 % for the IIGS. The mark given by hIGS to assess their satisfaction with their present life is 7.55 out of 10, versus 6.81 for IIGS, confirming a higher level of global satisfaction for high success perceivers. The Fisher test reveals that this issue discriminates among the two groups ( $F = 10.38$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ).



### 6.3.6. Synthesis and hypothesis acceptance

Relevant findings in relation with the research hypothesis H.7 are gathered in order to determine whether the hypothesis can be accepted.

*H.7 – High success perceivers also report higher levels of business performance and global satisfaction.*

Insights have been found in raw frequencies about high success perceivers' levels of satisfaction, as well as regarding their business performance. High success perceivers declare that they are totally happy, all things considered, in higher proportions than IIGS. They appear to be more optimistic as far as their personal future is concerned. Business performance proves to be better for high success perceivers than for IIGS according to a variety of indicators : sales, export turnover, net result after taxes, growth in number of employees, export turnover, net result after taxes and net profitability. A higher proportion of low success perceivers report temporary or serious difficulties regarding their firms. Logically, more IIGS would be in varying degrees tempted to work for a large firm.

All these findings suggest that high success perceivers have a higher state of satisfaction and a better business performance than low success perceivers. Beyond these insights, significant differences have been identified that enable to discriminate between high and low success perceivers. These reveal better reports from high success perceivers regarding :

- the achievement of their initial motivations,
- the perceived flourishing of their family life,
- their ability to combine familial and professional success,
- the mark given to assess their satisfaction with their present life,
- the satisfaction with their income,
- the satisfaction with their firm's size.

All these results suggest a significantly higher level of perceived achievement or satisfaction for high success perceivers. Business performance also appears to be linked with the respondents' high IGS scores. A correlation matrix has been established between the mark given to the satisfaction towards life, the IGS score and the net result after taxes. It is presented in Figure 6.19.

**Figure 6.19 – Correlation matrix – Satisfaction towards life, IGS score and net result after taxes.**

	Satisfaction towards life	IGS score	Net result after taxes
Satisfaction towards life	1.00	0.34	0.31
IGS score	0.34	1.00	0.29
Net result after taxes	0.31	0.29	1.00

It appears that all three variables : IGS score, satisfaction towards life and net result after taxes are positively correlated. It is argued that good business results are linked with higher levels of overall satisfaction and perceived success achievement, both professional and in general, that have an impact on the IGS score. The research hypothesis is thus accepted.

*H.7 – High success perceivers also report higher levels of business performance and global satisfaction – accepted.*

It is argued that the IGS evaluation method reflects both the firm’s performance and related satisfaction of the owner-manager. The prediction power and the relevance of the Index for Global Success scale to measure individual success is thus empirically supported. The benefits and contributions of the IGS method are developped in next section, and a discussion on these specific findings is conducted in section 7.2.2.



## **7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **7.1. SUMMING UP THE INITIAL AIMS AND EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **7.2. BENEFITS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

**7.2.1. Empirical support to the conceptual framework and the IGS method**

**7.2.2. The Index for Global Success : firm's performance and beyond**

### **7.3. IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.4. LIMITS AND METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS**

**7.4.1. Subjectivity and related methodological remarks**

**7.4.2. Rationale for the empirical part and structure validity of the three dimensions of success**

**7.4.3. Context-dependency and durability**

**7.4.4. Limits of the data collection**

### **7.5. ROUTES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

**7.5.1. The notion of failure**

**7.5.2. Investigation of the variables influencing the vision of success**

**7.5.3. International comparison**

## 7.1. SUMMING UP THE INITIAL AIMS AND EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS

The main aims and expected contributions of the present research were to :

- provide a reference basis on the notion of success for small firms' owner-managers ;
- extend the knowledge on owner-managers' concepts of success.

It is argued that the present study on small firms owner-managers' visions of success is a platform towards a widened knowledge about success and its evaluation, and that it provides alternative, seldom explored perspectives.

- Re-construct success beyond the all-economic rationale as composed of three dimensions : professional, familial and personal success ;
- re-construct success as an individual-based construct and a subjective notion ;
- elaborate a framework to describe the relationships between growth, performance and success.

The conceptual contribution was developed in section 4, and its empirical validation through the survey findings is presented in the next coming pages.

- Elaborate, apply and test an operationalised evaluation method for success.

Methodologically, the investigation and analyses were made possible by the operationalisation of success and the elaboration of a new evaluation method, the Index for Global Success (section 5).

This evaluation method is validated by the empirical findings as developed below.

- Explore gender-based differences in visions of success ;
- explore differences between 'high-' and 'low-success perceivers' ;
- test the link between Index for Global Success, business performance and individual satisfaction.

The descriptive statistics on male versus female respondents, and high- and low success perceivers are presented in section 6. The findings suggest that there are differences in their visions of success.

The results presented in section 6.3 also prove that the IGS, business performance and individual satisfaction are linked, and thus support the use of the Index for Global Success as a relevant tool to evaluate individual success. Further on, these findings are now analysed to discuss the relevance and benefits of the conceptual framework and the IGS method used to study small firms owner-managers' visions of success. Implications for research purpose and for policy making are



subsequently developed. The limits of the present research are also presented together with methodological remarks concerning the IGS evaluation method. Finally, directions for further research are suggested to improve our knowledge and understanding of small firms owner-managers' visions of success.

## 7.2. BENEFITS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

One could argue that a straightforward way to evaluate the respondents' perceived success is to ask them directly whether they feel successful. Apart from problems of social desirability and temporary feelings of the moment, this argument disregards the importance of the process in the IGS evaluation method. Even though the calculation of the index may seem simple, the complexity and very interest of this method lies in the preceding phases for the respondent. The benefit of this method as compared to the straightforward question regarding success, is firstly that it uses a more indirect approach. The approaches used in psychological tests demonstrate that indirect questions reduce the risk of bias induced by agreed-upon answers. The owner-manager is first asked to define the constitutive elements of each dimension of success. Even though these data are not used for the index, this preliminary step introduces a reflection that many owner-managers seldom have. They thus get an increased and explicit awareness of their definition of success, through an introspective work which is necessary to identify the elements they integrate in each professional, familial and personal dimensions of success. This process is a necessary step, the length of which does not seem to represent a major problem for the use of the questionnaire. This part should be seen as a stimulus for the respondents. After this reflection has been impulsed, the relevance of the owner-managers' replies on the weight they give to each dimension of success and respective levels of satisfaction is expected to be higher.

### 7.2.1. Empirical support to the conceptual framework and the IGS method

One of the major contribution of this method is to distinguish between professional, familial and personal success to get a more accurate measure of overall success. Maccoby (1990) explains that

the existing theories of motivation concentrate on one motivational aspect of the individual, who is successively considered from the economic, sociologic, political or psychological perspective, whereas these dimensions taken separately only reveal a partial reality. Consequently, the present study was designed within a conceptual framework which tends to gather various dimensions in order to grasp small business owner-managers' success in a broader perspective, beyond models that consider only the economic dimension (Bauer 1995, Mirvis and Hall 1994). The empirical findings demonstrate that together with the political concerns, familial aspects represent almost half of the weights in the respondents' decision-making processes (49 %). Moreover, extra-professional elements account for 64 % of their global success. The understatement of familial and personal dimensions can thus be expected to result in the omission of a large part of the individual's success. These observations provide strong empirical support to the importance of non economic concerns - extra-professional elements- and the need to integrate these when considering small firms owner-managers' success and attitudes. More specifically, the familial (38 %), professional (36 %) and personal dimensions (26 %) are given balanced weights within the respondents' global success (total being 100). This observation tends to validate the understanding of success as a three-dimensional concept. It confirms the relevance of the partition of individual success into professional, familial and personal dimensions, and thus the use of the Index for Global Success, as a composite index integrating these three dimensions which are not mutually exclusive and taking into account the respondents' priorities.

Furthermore, it has been observed that 29% of the respondents feel totally successful as far as familial success is concerned, while less of them report a similar level of achievement in the professional (20 %) and personal dimensions (15 %). In a similar order, the relative importance given to familial success stands at 37.8 %, while professional success accounts for 36.5 % and the personal dimension for 25.7 %. Even though not in similar proportions, these results suggest that the higher the importance given to the dimension, the higher the proportion of respondents who feel totally successful in that dimension. This observation tends to confirm the coherence of the IGS evaluation method, which is designed as the combination of these data :

$$IGS = (Wpr * Spr) + (Wfa * Sfa) + (Wpe * Spe)$$



where  $W$  is the relative importance given by the respondents to each dimension of success and  $S$  is the level of perceived achievement in each dimension. Success, as evaluated through the IGS, implies that individuals can only be considered as successful when they reach satisfaction, in all three dimension of success, at levels which prove in accordance with their preferences, i.e. the respective weights they personally give to these dimensions. For example, small firms owner-managers can be considered as successful when they achieve professional success, if only they have assessed professional success as a priority to them. A high IGS can only be reached with a good level of satisfaction in relation to the importance dedicated by the respondent to the respective dimension of success. Findings therefore provide empirical validation to the use of the IGS method to evaluate individuals' success.

#### 7.2.2. The Index for Global Success : firm's performance and beyond

The IGS method provides a distinction between high- and low success perceivers on the basis of their Index for Global Success, whereas performance prediction studies traditionally identify successful owner-managers on the basis of their firm's results. The performance of the firm may be explained by different sets of variables. One major trend is to focus on characteristics of the small firm owner-manager, or the entrepreneur, to predict and explain growth or performance. The traditional traits approach aims at making connections between a set of entrepreneurial characteristics (e.g. locus of control, need for achievement, growth motivation), and both the probability of becoming an entrepreneur and success once in business. Beyond this approach, socio-economic background factors have also been identified as having an influence on self employment (Stanworth and Gray, 1991). The selected references on socio-demographic determinants of performance presented in section 2.1.2. can be synthesised stating that owner-managers with a stronger experience and longer length of service are more likely to run rapidly growing or high performance firms (Cooper et al. 1994, Davidsson 1989, Kerdellant and Desnée 1995). These findings are drawn from studies which are based on traditional performance measures related to the firm's results. They can be compared with the findings of the present research, in order to observe

the differences that may be induced by the IGS evaluation method as compared with traditional performance measurement.

It can be stated from the present research that low success perceivers' parents were owner-managers and that they have a higher educational level than hIGS. It also appears that high success perceivers are older than lIGS and that they have a longer length of service in their firm. They have more created their present firm and other businesses in the past five years. More of them currently run another business, and they have been doing so for a longer period of time than lIGS. Even though low success perceivers have in larger proportions run a business before, it globally appears that the present findings confirm performance prediction studies' conclusions about the positive influence of experience on success.

As far as their professional success is concerned, it is also interesting to note that low success perceivers seem to be more concerned with the profitability of their firm. On the other side, hIGS are more concerned with its durability and development. This stronger concern of high success perceivers for long term perspectives can be related to their firms' results, which prove to be much better than for lIGS-run firms. High success perceivers manage larger firms, with better performance and growth achievement. They also report less difficulties for the business. High success perceivers appear to be more development oriented ; they receive higher income and report consequently higher levels of satisfaction. It appears that high success perceivers also feel more satisfied with their private life and its combination with work than lIGS. Other satisfaction-related results confirm a higher level of global satisfaction for high success perceivers. A general definition for success is given in section 4 as : *an ideal state of global satisfaction that may relate to family, personal or work fulfilment feelings, according to individual preferences*. The distinction is made between satisfaction which can be defined as the « successful attainment of a goal », and success which is the « attainment of a set of goals known as the conception of success » (section 4). While the IGS calculation method integrates the levels of perceived achievement for the three dimensions of success, the examination of other related satisfaction questions suggests that success and satisfaction are closely connected, and that this connection is reflected in the IGS evaluation of success. Statistical significance tests and a correlation matrix confirm that 'success' (evaluated through the Index for Global Success), business performance and individual satisfaction are



positively correlated (section 6.3.). The research hypothesis *H.7 – High success perceivers also report higher levels of business performance and global satisfaction* is accepted.

The Index for Global Success is thus proved to reflect the business performance, but it also reflects something which stands beyond the sole performance : the owner-manager's satisfaction. It is thus argued that the IGS evaluation method is a new relevant and widened individual measure of success, as compared to firm's performance.

It is interesting to remind at that point of the research the work by Bruyat on business founders. Bruyat (1994) has established a 'dialogic' of success and failure, according to both the performance of the firm, and the satisfaction of the founder. The resulting chart shows that firm's performance and owner-manager's satisfaction may not go together. Bruyat defines success as the result of a high level of firm's performance combined with a high level of individual's satisfaction (Bruyat, 1994 : 93). According to this definition of success, the Index for Global Success which is proved to reflect both firm's performance and individual satisfaction, receives additional legitimisation as an individual success measurement tool.

### 7.3. IMPLICATIONS

The IGS calculation, resulting in the Index for Global Success that reflects both the owner-manager's overall satisfaction and business performance, does not integrate economic data. This method may thus be used to evaluate the effects of economic measures on small firms owner-managers' individual success and well being -as stated before (Riffault 1994, Rothberg 1990) work success perceptions influence global life satisfaction. The IGS may also be used for classification purpose, in order to discriminate among groups of individuals to better understand why some are more 'successful' and 'happy' than others.

The study of small business owner-managers' visions of success may also help understand and identify small business owner-managers' growth willingness. Non economic barriers to growth have been studied by many researchers, showing an increased interest in recent years (Brytting 1991, Davidsson 1989, Wiklund et al 1997). Success being defined as a three-dimensional concept, the

integration of the firm's development in the owner-manager's definition of professional success suggests that s/he will be more willing to expand the business. The owner-managers' perceptions of achievement and related levels of satisfaction may also have an influence on their motivation and willingness to invest more effort in their business development (Cooper and Artz 1995, McClelland et al. 1953, Simon 1982). The importance of growth willingness in achieving growth was demonstrated by Wiklund (1998). The IGS method and the success perspective may thus provide an alternative tool to study and understand growth processes, on a socio-psychological basis and from the owner-manager's point of view.

It globally appears that the respondents report little concern for money and materialistic aspects of success. They define professional success in terms of the firm's durability, profitability or development, rather than considering the side benefits they could take advantage of. Familial success is defined more in terms of having their children raised in a stable environment and transmitting them values, than being strongly present on their sides or providing them with a legacy. The importance of values and principles is observed both in the respondents' definitions of familial and personal success. When defining personal success, the respondents seem to be rather self-oriented than concerned with social recognition or their social role.

These general findings contribute to a better knowledge of small firms owner-manager's visions of success. They also provide additional information that may be used to understand their attitudes and adapt to their concerns. It is argued that small firms owner-managers act and react according to their individual concerns and priorities (Bauer, 1995). A better knowledge of these individual concerns would thus improve the understanding of owner-managers' behaviors.

The results suggest that small firms owner-managers are more receptive to arguments relative to their firm's operations than to their own career or the money they can get from their firm. This finding has useful implications in terms of communication towards small firms owner-managers. Similarly, it is interesting to note that they praise values and principles highly. It may be important to take these into account when designing an efficient communication or marketing campaign. Globally, the increased knowledge in small firms owner-managers' conceptions of success and the IGS method have possible applications in the counselling and coaching area, for all the actors who



work with small firms owner-managers. It may help them determine the owner-manager's psychological state and identify the key elements that may be improved to achieve a higher level of success.

These research findings may also be used to facilitate the communication and exchanges between the owner-managers and their various stakeholders. Provost and Leddick (1993) state that the evaluation of performance must not rely on a single measure of success. They suggest that a holistic understanding of organisational performance can be reached by a set of measures which gathers the various stakeholders of the organisation. Atkinson, Waterhouse and Wells (1997) develop a model for strategic performance measurement that integrates implicit and explicit contractual relationships with the firm's stakeholders, by specifying what the company expects from each stakeholder to achieve its primary objectives (typically profit-related), and what these stakeholders expect in return. This tool helps all members understand and evaluate their respective contributions and expectations.

Owner-managers are not alone in their firm, and they must cope with other parties' expectations (customers, suppliers, employees, but also friends and family beyond the business community). The various stakeholders may have different goals and conceptions of what is success. It can for example be assumed that financial partners seek financial results and guarantees, while the owner-manager privileges the firm's development. As seen previously with Bauer's work (1995), the owner-manager's decisions are even the result of various economic, political and familial logics which represent conflicting interests. As a final supplementary source of conflicts, the various stakeholders of the firm may have different perceptions regarding the firm's success.

The definition provided by Wheeler and Sillanpää (1997) : "individuals and entities who may be affected by the business (organisation), and who may in turn, bring influence upon it" suggests that stakeholders may be suppliers, customers or shareholders, but also family members as less apparent or 'secondary' stakeholders -spouses and children who are directly affected by their spouse / parent's activity led by operating the business and who may in turn have an indirect impact on the owner-manager's decision making for the business through the elaboration of his/her preferences and priorities (Bauer, 1995). It is particularly intriguing to know whether the respondents' families

would have given similar assessments on their familial life as their spouses / parents, and it would be of highest interest to confront their visions of success.

The multiple actors' divergences in goals, expectations and perceptions -their visions of success- may represent a major source of conflict. A better awareness of the subjectivity of success may help all the parties accept their differences through the understanding and recognition of each individual's goals and expectations. For practical purpose, both intrapersonal –as developed in the present dissertation, and extrapersonal dynamics should be integrated for a further understanding of success. This may be achieved by a preliminary mapping by the owner-managers of their stakeholders and their inter-relationships. Then, each stakeholder's vision of success should be investigated and the findings be related to each other in order to identify potential sources of misunderstandings and conflicts.

#### 7.4. LIMITS AND METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS

After referring to the complexity of setting up a measurement tool for the achievement motive, McClelland et al. (1953) state that “Even more important than these questions is the basic issue of whether or not a score so derived is a valid index of an individual's achievement motive [...] There will probably always be a small percentage of every population tested for whom this measure of achievement motivation will not be adequate. [...] And last but not least, what evidence is there that our achievement index is *really* a measure of motivation ?” (McClelland et al., 1953: 326). The validity of the Index for Global Success is similarly difficult to assess, as it refers to perceptions. These are quantified by the mean of weights and levels of satisfaction, but still remain subjective notions. Even though the opportunity for the owner-managers to fill it anonymously is expected to provide an increased reliability, data collection and validity highly rely on the honesty of the respondents filling the questionnaire or providing answers.

The study of perceptions can obviously not be operated as strict reality. There is no strict reality as far as success in the present perspective is concerned, as every individual has his/her own



conception of success. The aim of the present research is to evaluate perceptions, in the most appropriate and accurate way.

#### 7.4.1. Subjectivity and related methodological remarks

Sigmund Freud has defended a theory according to which each individual has a *ego*, who tries to control the forces of the subconscious, and a *super-ego*, who has the role of a censor and who makes the individual feel guilty whenever s/he succumbs to the subconscious. The *super-ego*, acting as an internal censor, is present in every individual to a greater or lesser extent. It may strongly influence the answers of the owner-managers and make them answer what they *should* answer, or in other words what is socially agreed-upon. Moreover, self reported assessments, e.g. of satisfaction, reflect the re-constructed reality of the respondents. These drawbacks are inherent to the method of interviewing, and the researcher should keep them in mind and correct the biases whenever they may occur.

Even though it is difficult to estimate the reliability of subjective statements, e.g. on the familial background of the respondents, it is much more interesting for the present purpose to get the owner-managers' perceptions and appreciations rather than objective real facts. It is not the intention to determine whether the familial environment has had an influence on their becoming owner-managers or on their firms' performance. In that case, it would have been necessary to test the reliability of our measurement tool. However for the present research, it is their feelings about childhood, more than what actually happened, which makes the value of the research.

#### The use of a questionnaire to study a subjective construct

The use of a questionnaire to study of success as a subjective and individual construct may raise criticisms. It may be seen as a paradox or even a contradiction. The first response to this suspicion is that the questionnaire is too rapidly categorised as 'quantitative' or 'objective' only because it is administered to a high number of owner-managers. In the present research, the content of the findings derived from the questionnaires are highly subjective as far as these deal with the

respondents' perceptions and opinions rather than objective data. Thus, despite the use of a questionnaire and of descriptive statistics to present some of the results, it is still claimed that the present research is of qualitative essence.

The items integrated in the questionnaire were derived from both theoretical insights from the existing literature, and from empirical practice, i.e. the preliminary study interviews, which were designed to stimulate creativity and generate such insights.

#### Standardisation of a subjective notion

It may also be objected that the definition of success cannot be operationalised while defining it as a subjective, individual notion. The intention is not to develop a standardised definition of success, as this would obviously be in total contradiction with the conceptual framework that was elaborated, but rather to provide a standardised method to evaluate each individual's perception of his/her success. The operationalisation of success thus respects the subjectivity and individualisation of success and still acts a perceptive measure.

#### 7.4.2. Rationale for the empirical part and structure validity

As far as the Index for Global Success is concerned, it may be objected that the identification of the three domains (professional, personal and familial success) is not validated statistically and their structure validity may thus be questioned.

In the conceptualisation part, the determination of these three dimensions is firstly achieved intuitively and then empirically validated through interviews. The second, empirical section should be seen as an extension, a support to the conceptualisation part, rather than an additional second source of data. Moreover, according to the rationale followed for this IGS method, it is not the elements integrated by the respondents in each of the dimensions, or the definitions they give for each domain of success that is important in revealing their success scores. Rather, it is the relationship that exists between the relative importance they assess to, and the respective level of perceived achievement they report for each dimension of success that really matters. What is



illustrated by the Index for Global Success is the extent to which the respondent perceives him/herself as successful in accordance with personal reported standards, whatever his/her conception of success is. The respondent's definitions and conceptions of professional, familial and personal success are rather observed and analysed through more qualitative methods as described in section 5.2.

#### 7.4.3. Context-dependency and durability

As far as the cultural context is concerned, it was mentioned in section 6.2 that France has a low masculinity index according to Hofstede's work (1991). According to the author, France is characterised by a high need for security and recognition, a high risk control and a dominance of feminine culture. This may have introduced some bias in the findings and thus may have reduced the differences observed between male and female respondents.

It has been argued in the conceptual framework that success was a context-dependent notion. The individual's self-reported definition of success, level of satisfaction, and importance given to each dimension of success are influenced by both contextual variables and the individual's emotional state. It is therefore assumed that the present method provides findings on success which are relevant at a given time and in a given context. It would have been interesting to conduct a longitudinal study to observe the effects of these time and context related variables on an individual's conception of success.

The socio-economic climate in France by the time the postal survey was achieved can be considered as one of these contextual variable and a potential source of bias. During the Summer 1998, the social climate in France was globally positive, with a remarkable peak of optimism after the French victory in the Football World Cup in July. The economic context was also in a good state. Employment, consumption and investments indicators were positive. The GNP growth reaches 3 % while it was at 2.3 % in 1997 and 1.6 % in 1996 (Mauduit, 1999 : 130). The firms' investments, after eight years of stagnation, started increasing. However, the economic crisis in South-eastern

Asian countries and the Russian bankruptcy affected business leaders' confidence. Moreover, everyone keeps in mind the year 1994, when many experts have announced an economic improvement that turned out to be an illusion. It is thus observed that the good economic indicators did not generate enthusiastic reactions, but rather cautious behaviour (Mauduit, 1999 : 130). However, as explained by Mauduit, Minister Strauss-Kahn maintained his optimistic forecasts, aware that economics are often a matter of psychology and that negative expectations may well have self-induced causes. The economic context in 1998 is thus expected to have little consequence on owner-managers' replies to the questionnaire, as business leaders seemed to hesitate between suspicion and enthusiasm as a reaction to the positive economic results.

#### 7.4.4. Limits of the data collection

Some variables included in the questionnaire were not used in the present study, and the related space could have been used to integrate more accurate questions or left blank to reduce the questionnaire size. However, the present research being supported by the Centre EURO PME, the questions that were not analysed in the present study may be used in future research by the Centre. The sample also needed to be widened to follow the Centre's sampling conditions. All these may have limited the response rate and the accuracy of the questionnaire.

Yet, all the questions that needed to be addressed were included and the 236 replies received enabled the analyses to be done on descriptive statistics. These analyses are considered as illustrations of the dissertation's perspective, and participate of its various contributions.



## **7.5. ROUTES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The present research has elaborated and set the conceptual and methodological grounds for the study of success and its evaluation. Additional research may be conducted on the concept of success via the notion of failure. In order to draw the benefits of the present reflection and increase related knowledge, further investigation also needs to be done on the variables that influence the vision of success.

### **7.5.1. The notion of failure**

A further way to learn about success is to study failure. It appears that failure is a seldom explored notion, mainly used to identify organisational factors associated with business failure and to build prediction models for small firm's bankruptcy (Hall and Young 1991, Keasey and Watson 1991, Lalonde and d'Amboise 1986, Watson and Everett 1996). This traditional approach raises the same criticisms as already expressed for performance studies (section 2). Beyond the economic and financial view, failure may though interestingly be studied as a subjective concept. As stated by McClelland et al., "there is evidence that experiences of success have different effects from experiences of failure, but here again our research has only scratched the surface" (McClelland et al., 1953: 325). Winter-Ebmer (1994) differentiates economic motivation into 'search for success' and 'fear of failure' and finds out that the positive type of motivation produces more positive results. The combined investigation of visions of success and visions of failure may open the road to new perspectives and contribute to a better understanding of success as a subjective concept. It is thus recommended that a similar study on small firms owner-managers' visions of failure be conducted.

### **7.5.2. Investigation of the variables influencing the vision of success**

While male respondents define all the dimensions of success in a more pragmatic and materialistic way, females have a higher propensity to select elements in relation with the individual

development and accomplishment. Globally, females show a propensity to report higher total levels of success achievement. They give more importance to personal success than males and report significantly higher levels of total success in this dimension. They also have a much better perception of their family lives flourishing, even though more females perceive the difficulties encountered in combining work, family and personal lives. However the familial dimension is given slightly stronger importance by males who also report relatively higher familial success achievement.

While it is demonstrated that female respondents place higher concern on personal success, it is not the case for familial success. Female respondents have a higher Index for Global Success than males, what may be explained by their higher scores in personal success in relation with its perceived importance.

These results suggest that differences exist between males' and females' conceptions of success, and suggest that gender may be a variable influencing the individual's vision of success. However, the present research had no testing purpose, but rather aimed at exploring these differences. The nature and intensity of this relationship can thus only be hypothesised at this point of the research. Further research should aim at identifying other variables that have an impact on individuals' visions of success, and determine the nature and intensity of these relationships through statistical analyses (Cooper and Artz, 1995). It is recommended that these analyses focus on variables in the individual's background and profile, on a socio-psychological basis.

One of these variables is the age or life-cycle, of the owner-manager. As stated before, the Index for Global Success is not assumed to be stable over time. Both age and life-cycle are expected to have an influence on the owner-managers' perceptions and reported level of success achievement. Older individuals are expected to report higher levels of satisfaction (Herzog and Rogers, 1986). It may be argued that expectations and aspirations decline with age, consequently with the decrease in possible alternatives. It is though interesting to note that Cooper and Artz (1995), applying the discrepancy theory to study entrepreneurial satisfaction, find that entrepreneurs with higher initial expectations also report higher levels of satisfaction with their business. This finding proves contradictory with the discrepancy theory, which suggests that higher expectations result in later lower satisfaction. Beyond the historic context, this finding suggests that individuals' attitudes are



also a function of stable individual traits. However, as mentioned by de Carlo and Lyons (1980) referring though to the firms' lifecycle, it is « important to identify the psychological state of the individual, the sources and intensities of satisfaction, and the required management skills for each stage » (De Carlo and Lyons, 1980 : 41).

These dynamics are not integrated in the Index for Global Success, which is rather a picture of individual success at a given time, but they can be tested through an age-based comparative analysis. Age is expected to capture both experience and life-cycle. The way to grasp the impact of age and life-cycle on the individuals' visions of success is to generate hypotheses through a cross-sectional study and then test them through a longitudinal study. The present research may provide data to generate these hypotheses through a comparative analysis on an age basis. However, it is argued that the study of the age and life-cycle influence should rather be the subject of a next step and thus constitute a whole new chapter of the research on success.

#### 7.5.3. International comparison

An international comparison is also recommended as a further research to evaluate the impact of cultural national elements. Insights can be found in Blais and Toulouse's (1989) study on national and regional patterns of entrepreneurial motivations. Their results tend to demonstrate that entrepreneurial motivations differ according to regional socio-economic and political environments, e.g. within Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian clusters of countries. The familial tradition to go into business seems to be lower in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries. The need for social approval and recognition is particularly high in Anglo-Saxon countries and in developing countries, while it is less important in Italy, Portugal, and Scandinavian regions. The desire for wealth is a stronger entrepreneurial motivation in poorer countries and Quebec. The link between national wealth and individual happiness has also been investigated by Veenhoven (1989). His study suggests that the level of individual happiness is not only socially relative, but also sensitive to collective economic conditions. He argues that the economic prosperity of a country affects the degree to which citizens enjoy life, and that economic ups and downs result in fluctuations around an average level of high satisfaction in rich countries (Veenhoven, 1989: 30). It can thus be

expected that individuals in richer countries will report higher levels of satisfaction and perceived achievement.

The work by Hofstede (1991) also suggests ways to study the influence of national cultures on visions of success. He states that prestige symbols are considered as normal and going together with abilities in countries with a high hierarchical distance, while they are negatively perceived in low distance countries. Similarly, individual interest and self achievement are praised higher in individualistic than in collectivist societies. Hofstede also refers to McClelland's work and establishes the correlation between need for achievement and specific cultural patterns. The motivation by the need for achievement seems to be higher for countries with a low level of risk control, while other societies seek more security. All these findings may find applications in the study of success conceptions and result in research hypotheses. In concordance with these previous findings (see also Motlagh 1995, Recken 1993), it would thus be most interesting to identify geographical regions with common cultural patterns that are hypothesised to have an effect on visions of success, and to conduct an international survey on this basis, in order to assess the link between national or regional culture and individuals' conceptions of success.

The routes for further research presented in this section open the road to exciting new perspectives for the study of the individual's vision of success and its elaboration through socio-cultural and psychological factors. The Index for Global Success has found empirical support and legitimacy in the present research. It was proved to reflect both individual satisfaction and business performance, acting as a complex and powerful tool. It may thus become a genuinely global scale for measuring individual success as *an ideal state of global satisfaction that may relate to family, personal or work fulfilment feelings, according to individual preferences.*



## REFERENCES

- Abric, J.C. (ed.) (1994) *Pratiques sociales et représentations*, Paris: PUF, Psychologie sociale.
- Adair, P. (1998) 'Rétrospective des interactions entre économie et psychologie', *Cahiers du GRATICE*, 14, 1st semester, 3-20.
- Anderson, A.R. and Jack, S.L. (1999) 'The production of prestige: An entrepreneurial viagra', *Babson College Conference*, Columbia, May.
- APCE (1999) *Les chiffres des créations ex-nihilo, des reprises et des réactivations en 1998*, APCE Web Site, March.
- Atkinson, A.A., Waterhouse, J.H. and Wells, R.B. (1997) 'A stakeholder approach to strategic performance measurement', *Sloan Management Review*, Spring, 25-37.
- Bauer, M. (1995) 'PME : un patronat aux trois visages', *Les Cahiers de l'ANVIE, Sciences Humaines*, 48, March, 34-37.
- Begley, T.M. and Boyd, D.P. (1986) 'Executive and corporate correlates of financial performance in smaller firms', *Journal of Small Business Management*, 4, 2, April, 8-15.
- Begley, T.M. and Boyd, D.P. (1987a) 'Psychological characteristics associated with performance in entrepreneurial firms and smaller business', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 2, 79-93.
- Begley, T.M. and Boyd, D.P. (1987b) 'A comparison of entrepreneurs and managers of small business firms', *Journal of Management*, 13, 1, 99-108.
- Bellu (1988) 'Entrepreneurs and managers: are they different ?'. In Babson College (ed.) *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, Wellesley, MA: Babson College, 16-30.
- Bernard, V. (1994) 'Les gains des salariés en octobre 1993', *Premières Informations - DARES*, Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Formation professionnelle, 94-32, 408, May.

- Bhide, A. (1996) 'The questions every entrepreneur must answer', *Harvard Business Review*, 74, 6, November - December, 120-130.
- Birch, D. (1979) *The job generation process*, Cambridge, MA: MIT program on neighborhood and regional change.
- Birch, D. (1983) *The contribution of small enterprise to growth and employment*, MA: Cambridge.
- Birley, S. (1989) 'Female entrepreneurs: are they really any different ?', *Journal of Small Business Management*, 27, 1, 33-37.
- Blais, R.A. and Toulouse, J.-M. (1989) 'National, regional or world patterns of entrepreneurial motivation ?', *6<sup>th</sup> ICSB Annual Conference* - Canada, Windsor, November.
- Bonneau, J. (1994) 'La création d'entreprises, source de renouvellement du tissu des PME', *Economie et Statistique*, 271-272, January-February, 25-36.
- Bouchikhi, H. (1993) 'A constructivist framework for understanding entrepreneurship performance', *Organizations Studies*, 14, 4, 549-570.
- Brockhaus, R.H. (1980) 'Psychological and environmental factors which distinguish the successful from the unsuccessful entrepreneur : a longitudinal study', *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 368-372.
- Brockhaus, R.H. (1982) 'The psychology of the entrepreneur'. In Kent, C.A., Sexton, D.A. and Vesper, K.H. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Entrepreneurship*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 39-57.
- Bruyat, C. (1994) 'Contributions épistémologiques au domaine de l'entrepreneuriat', *Revue Française de Gestion*, 101, November – December, 87-99.
- Brytting, T. (1991) *Organizing the small growing firm. A grounded theory approach*. Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy, Stockholm School of Economics.
- Bygrave, W.D. (1989a) 'The entrepreneurship paradigm (1) : a philosophical look at its research methodologies', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 14, 1, 7-26.



- Bygrave, W.D. (1989b) 'The entrepreneurship paradigm (2) : chaos and catastrophes among quantum jumps ?', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 14, 2, 7-30.
- Carland, J.W., Hoy, F., Boulton, W.R. and Carland, J.A.C. (1984) 'Differentiating entrepreneurs from small business owners : a conceptualization', *Academy of Management Review*, 9, 2, 354-359.
- Carsrud, A.L. and Olm, K.W. (1986) 'The success of male and female entrepreneurs : a comparative analysis of the effects of multidimensional achievement motivation and personality traits'. In Smilor, R.W. and Kuhn, R.L. (eds) *Managing take-off in fast growing companies*, Praeger Publishers, 147-161.
- Chaganti, R. (1986) 'Management in women-owned enterprises', *Journal of Small Business Management*, October, 18-29.
- Chagué, V. (1997) 'Gérer la technologie dans les PME', *CEREGE*, 156, June.
- Chell, E, Haworth, J, Brearley, S (1991) *The entrepreneurial personality: concepts, cases and categories*, London: Routledge.
- Churchill, N.C. and Lewis, V.L. (1983) 'The five stages of business growth', *Harvard Business Review*, 3, May-June, 30-50.
- Collins, O. F., Moore, D.G. and Unwalla D. B. (1964) *The enterprising man*, East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Business Studies.
- Colson, M.L. (1996) 'La richesse d'un pays ne fait pas son bonheur', *Le Monde*, 17<sup>th</sup> July 1996, 6.
- Commissariat Général du Plan (ed.) (1994) *La performance globale : outils et évaluation*, October.
- Cooper, A.C. and Artz, K.W. (1995) 'Determinants of satisfaction for entrepreneurs', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 10, 6, 439-457.
- Cooper, A.C., Dunkelberg, W.C., Woo, C.Y. and Dennis, W. (1990) *New business in America : the firms and their owners*, Washington D.C.: The NFIB Foundation.
- Cooper, A.C., Gimeno-Gascon, F.J. and Woo, C.Y. (1991) 'A resource-based prediction of new venture survival and growth', *Academy of Management Proceedings*, Summer, 113-119.

- Cooper, A.C., Gimeno-Gascon, F.J. and Woo, C.Y. (1994) 'Initial human and financial capital as predictors of new venture performance, *Journal of Business Venturing*, 9, 5, 371-395.
- Cooper, A.C., Woo, C.Y. and Dunkelberg, W.C. (1988) 'Entrepreneur's perceived chances for success', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 3, 2, 97-108.
- Crozier, M. and Sérieyx, H. (1994) *Du management panique à l'entreprise du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Maxima Laurent du Mesnil Editeur.
- D'Amboise, G. and Gasse, Y. 'Small business managerial difficulties and success factors in four industrial sub-sectors in Quebec', *Laval University*.
- Daily, C.M. and Dalton, D.R. (1992) 'Financial performance of founder manager versus professionally managed small corporations', *Journal of Small Business Management*, .30, 2, April, 25-34.
- Davidsson, P. (1989) *Continued entrepreneurship and small firm growth*, Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy, Stockholm School of Economics.
- Davidsson, P. and Delmar, F. (1997) 'High growth firms and their contribution to employment: The case of Sweden 1987-96', *RENT XI Conference*, Mannheim, November.
- Davidsson, P., Lindmark, L. and Olofsson, C. (1997) 'SMEs and job creation during a recession and recovery'. In Acs, Z., Carlsson, B. and Karlsson, C. (eds) *SMEs, entrepreneurship and the macro economy*, Cambridge University Press.
- Davidsson, P. and Wiklund, J. (1998) 'Conceptual and empirical challenges in the study of firm growth', working paper, *Jönköping Business School*.
- De Carlo, J.F. and Lyons, P.R. (1980) 'Toward a contingency theory of entrepreneurship', *Journal of Small Business Management*, 13, 3, 37-42
- Delmar, F. (1996) *Entrepreneurial behavior and business performance*, Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy, Stockholm School of Economics.
- Delmar, F. and Davidsson, P. (1998) 'A taxonomy of high growth firms'. In Babson College (ed.) *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, Wellesley, MA: Babson College.



- Dietz, M.K. (1991) *The American cult and cultivation of success : Dickinson to James*, Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy, New York University.
- Duchéneaut, B. (1996a) 'Thoughts on development, change, and their incidence on management', *Groupe ESC Rennes Research Review*, Special Edition NIBS'96, 45-61.
- Duchéneaut, B. (1996b) *Les dirigeants de PME*, Maxima - Laurent du Mesnil Editeur.
- Duchéneaut, B. (1995) *Enquête sur les PME françaises*, Maxima - Laurent du Mesnil Editeur.
- Echebarria Echabe, A. (1992) 'Gender Social identity, values and cognitive styles', *International Review of Social Psychology*, 5, 2, 9-20.
- Filion, L.J. (1997) 'Le champ de l'entrepreneuriat : historique, évolution, tendances', *Revue Internationale PME*, 10, 2, 129-172.
- Francfort, I., Osty, F., Sainsaulieu, R. and Uhalde, M. (1995) *Les mondes sociaux de l'entreprise*, Collection Sociologie économique, Desclée de Brouwer.
- Friedman, M. and Rosenman, R.H. (1974) *Type A behavior and your heart*, Knopf.
- Flamholtz, E. (1990) *Growing Pains*, Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Frances, R. (1981) *La satisfaction dans le travail et l'emploi*, Paris, PUF.
- Gartner, W.B. (1988) 'Who is an entrepreneur ? is the wrong question', *American Journal of Small Business*, Spring, 11-31.
- Gartner, W.B. (1993) 'Words lead to deeds : towards an organizational emergence vocabulary', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 8, 231-239.
- Gartner, W.B. and Markman, G.D. (1999) 'Is growth profitable ? A study of Inc. 500 fast growth companies', *Babson College Conference*, Columbia, May.
- Gasse, Y. (1982) 'Elaborations on the psychology of the entrepreneur'. In Kent, C.A., Sexton, D.A. and Vesper, K.H. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Entrepreneurship*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 57-66.
- Gaudin, T. (1990) *2100, récit du prochain siècle*, Payot.

- Glaser, B.G. (1978) *Theoretical sensitivity*, San Francisco: The sociology press.
- Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory - Strategies for qualitative research*, New York: Aldine.
- Gray, C. (1989) Book Review, *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 10, 4, 593-596.
- Gray, C. (1990) 'Entrepreneurial motivation and the smaller business', *15<sup>th</sup> IAREP Colloquium*, Exeter, July.
- Gray, C. (1998) *Enterprise and culture*, London: Routledge.
- Hall, G. and Young, B. (1991) 'Factors associated with insolvency amongst small firms', *International Small Business Journal*, 9, 2, January-March, 54-63.
- Hankinson, A. and Gillingham, D.W. (1995) 'Predicting survival : the small firm under recession 1990-1995', *Business Growth and Profitability*, May, 178-182.
- Hartman, S.J. et al. (1988) 'The impact of occupation, performance and sex on sex role stereotyping', *Journal of Social Psychology*, 128, 4, 451-463.
- Hedge, J.W. and Borman, W.C. (1995) 'Changing conceptions and practices in performance appraisal'. In Howard, A. (ed.) *The changing nature of work*, Jossey Bass Publishers, 451-481.
- Herrmann, N. (1988) *Les dominances cérébrales et la créativité*, The Ned Herrmann Group, Brain Books (French edition Retz, Paris, 1992).
- Herzberg, F. (1966) *Work and the nature of man*, New York: The Mentor Executive Library.
- Herzog, A.R. and Rogers, W.L. (1986) Satisfaction among older adults. In Andrews, F.M. (ed.) *Research on the quality of life*, Ann Harbor, MI: University of Michigan Institute for Social Research.
- Hofstede, G. (1991) *Cultures and Organisations - Software of the mind*, Mac Graw Hill Book Company.



- Ibrahim, A.B. and Goodwin, J.R. (1986) 'Perceived causes of success', *American Journal of Small Business*, 11, 2, Fall, 41-50.
- INSEE (1996) *Déclarations annuelles des salaires*, INSEE Web site.
- INSEE (1999a) *Tableaux de l'Economie Française 1998/99*, INSEE.
- INSEE (1999b) *Annuaire statistique de la France – Edition 1999*, INSEE.
- Johannisson, B. and Robertson, E. (1997) 'Enacting the entrepreneurial career – Organising casual encounters and random events through personal networking', *RENT XI Conference*, Mannheim, November.
- Keasey, K. and Watson, R. (1991) 'The state of the art of small firm failure prediction : achievements and prognosis', *International Small Business Journal*, 9, 4, July-September, 11-29.
- Kerdellant, C. and Desnée, J. (1995) 'Etes-vous un bon manager ?', *L'Entreprise*, 121, November, 30-31.
- King, M.A. (1988) *Toward an understanding of the phenomenology of fulfillment in success*, EDD, University of Massachussets.
- Kroeger, C.V. (1974) 'Managerial development in the small firm', *California Management Review*, 17, 1, Fall, 41-47.
- Lalonde, C. and d'Amboise, G. (1986) 'Le propriétaire dirigeant failli : les éléments d'un profil', *Gestion 2000*, 2, 3, 15-40.
- Lawrence, P.R. and Lorsch, J.W. (1969) *Adapter les structures de l'entreprise*, Paris: Editions de l'Organisation (edition of 1986).
- L'Entreprise (1994) 'Les vrais salaires dans les entreprises', *L'Entreprise*, 104, May.
- Loiseau, B. and Dupont, C. (1981) 'Facteurs de succès et d'échecs dans les PME', *Revue française de Gestion*, September-October, 19-30.

- Lorrain, J., Belle, A. and Ramangalahy, C. (1994) 'Relation entre le comportement des propriétaires dirigeants et le stade d'évolution de leur entreprise', *Revue Internationale PME*, 7, 1, 9-32.
- Loscocco, K.A., Robinson, J., Hall, R.H. and Allen, J.K. (1991) 'Gender and small business success: An inquiry into women's relative disadvantage', *Social Forces*, 70, 65-85.
- Lunt, P., Williams, R. and Olafsson, R. (1998) 'Psychologie sociale des croyances économiques'. In Roland-Lévy, C. and Adair, P. (eds) *Psychologie économique – Théories et applications*, Paris: Economica, 35-49.
- Lussier, R.N. (1995) 'A nonfinancial business success versus failure prediction model for young firms', *Journal of Small Business Management*, 33, 1, 8-20.
- Mac Clelland, J. (1997). In Ubisoft (ed.) *Les secrets de l'intelligence*, Carnegie-Mellon, CD Rom.
- Maccoby, M. (1990) *Travailler pourquoi ? Une nouvelle théorie de la motivation*, Interéditions.
- Mac Lure, M.L. (1990) *Characteristics associated with entrepreneurial success*, Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Mahé de Boislandelle, H. (1996) 'L'effet de grossissement chez le dirigeant de PME : incidences sur le management des ressources humaines', *Gestion 2000*, 4, July-August, 105-123.
- Marchesnay, M. (1986) *La stratégie*, Editions Chotard.
- Marchesnay, M. and Fourcade, C. (1997) *Gestion de la PME-PMI*, Editions Nathan, Collection Etapes.
- Mason, C. (1991) 'Spatial variations in enterprise: the geography of new firm formation'. In Burrows, R. (ed.) *Deciphering the enterprise culture: entrepreneurship, petty capitalism and the restructuring of Britain*, London: Routledge.
- Mauduit, L. (1999) 'D'excellents résultats'. In Le Monde (ed.) *Bilan économique et social du Monde*, 130.
- Mc Clelland, D.C. (1961) *The achieving society*, Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand.



- Mc Clelland, D.C., Atkinson, J.W., Clark, R.A, and Lowell, E.L. (1953) *The achievement motive*, New York : Appleton-Century-Crofts (revised edition, 1976).
- Merriam and Webster Inc. (eds) (1986) *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*.
- Merz, G.R., Weber, P.B. and Laetz, V.B. (1994) 'Linking small business management with entrepreneurial growth', *Journal of Small Business Management*, 32, 4, October, 48-60.
- Michalos, A.C. (1986) 'Job satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and the quality of life: a review and preview'. In Andrews, F.M. (ed.) *Research on the quality of life*, Ann Harbor, MI: University of Michigan Institute for Social Research.
- Michit, R. (1996) 'Representation social and professionals' decisions'. In Roland-Lévy, C. (ed.) *Social and economic representations*, IAREP-Paris 1996, XXIst annual colloquium, Université René Descartes Paris V.
- Miner, J B. (1997) 'A psychological typology and its relationship to entrepreneurial success', *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 9, 319-334.
- Miner, J.B., Smith, N.R. and Bracker, J.S. (1992) 'Predicting firm survival from a knowledge of entrepreneur task motivation', *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 4, 145-153.
- Miner, J.B., Smith, N.R. and Bracker, J.S. (1994) 'Role of entrepreneurial task motivation in the growth of technologically innovative firms', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79, 627-630.
- Miron, D. and Mc Clelland, D.C. (1979) 'The impact of achievement motivation training on small business performance', *California Management Review*, 21, 4, 13-28.
- Mirvis, P. H. and Hall, D.T. (1994) 'Psychological success and the boundaryless career', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 15, 4, 365-380.
- Montagno, R.V., Kuratko, D.F. and Scarcella, J.H. (1986) 'Perception of entrepreneurial success characteristics', *American Journal of Small Business*, 10, 3, 25-32.
- Motlagh, O. Romero-Davaie (1995) *Success as defined by Mexican-American women : a qualitative study*, Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy, University of California, Los Angeles.

- Pai, R. (1989) *Small-scale enterprises for women in developing countries: assessing causes and definitions of success in selected case studies in India*, EDD, University of Massachusetts.
- Pantou, E. (1997) Interview of Serge Pozza, *EKO Rennes Chamber of Trade and Industry Review*, January.
- Paradas, A. (1993) *Contribution à l'évaluation de la formation professionnelle en PME*, Dissertation for the Doctorat en Sciences de Gestion, Université de Montpellier I.
- Pfeffer, J. (1982) *Organizations and organization theory*, Boston, MA : Pitman.
- Pleitner, H. (1983) 'Job satisfaction as a managerial concern', *European Small Business Journal*, 1, 1, 46-57.
- Poynter, J.T. (1991) *Georgia's Bed and Breakfast Inn industry: an exploratory study to identify success factors*, Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy, University of Georgia.
- Provost, L. and Leddick, S. (1993) 'How to take multiple measures to get a complete picture of organizational performance', *National Productivity Review*, 12, 4, Autumn, 477-490.
- Ray, D.M. (1986) 'Perceptions of risk and new enterprise formation in Singapore: an exploratory study'. In Babson College (ed.) *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, Wellesley, MA: Babson College.
- Ray, D.M. (1994) 'The role of risk-taking in Singapore', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 9, 2, 157-177.
- Recken, S.L. (1993) 'Fitting-in : the redefinition of success in the 1930s', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 27, 3, 205-222.
- Reynolds, P. (1987) 'New firms : societal contribution versus potential', *Journal of Business Venturing*, Summer, 231-246.
- Reynolds, P. and Miller, B. (1989) 'New firm survival : analysis of a panel's fourth year'. In Babson College (ed.) *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, Wellesley, MA: Babson College.
- Riffault, H. (1994) *Les valeurs des Français*, PUF, Collection Sociologie.



- Rosa, P.J. and Scott, M.G. (1996) 'Portfolio entrepreneurs : some empirical evidence of the multiple ownership or control of SMEs and its implication for our understanding of start-up and growth', *RENT X Conference*, Brussels, November.
- Rothberg, H.N. (1990) *The impact of work success, congruency, and individual differences on well being*, Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy, City University of New York.
- Sadler, C.E. (1987) *An interpretation of employee definitions of success and failure*, Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy, The University of Utah.
- Scherer, R.F., Brodzinski, J.D. and Wiebe, F.A. (1990) 'Entrepreneur career selection and gender: a socialization approach', *Journal of Small Business Management*, April, 37-44.
- Schumpeter, J. (1934) *The theory of economic development*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sexton, D.L. and Bowman, N. (1985) 'The entrepreneur: a capable executive and more', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 1, 129-140.
- Simon, H.A. (1982) *Models of bounded rationality* (2 vol.), Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Simon, H. (1996) *Hidden champions – Lessons from 500 of the world's best unknown companies*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Slipowitz, C. (1992) *Professional women's concepts of success and achievement*, PsyD, Massachussets School of Professional Psychology.
- Smilor, R.W. and Feeser, H.R. (1991) 'Chaos and the entrepreneurial process : patterns and policy implications for technology entrepreneurship', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 6, 165-172.
- Smith, N.R. (1967) *The entrepreneur and his firm: the relationship between type of man and type of company*, East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.
- Smith, N.R. and Miner, J.B. (1983) 'Type of entrepreneur, type of firm and entrepreneurial motivation : implications for organisational life cycle theory', *Strategic Management Journal*, 4, 4, 325-340.

- Solymossy, E. (1997) 'Push/Pull motivations: does it matter in venture performance?'. In Babson College (ed.) *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, Wellesley, MA: Babson College.
- Stanworth, J. and Gray, C. (eds) (1991) *Bolton - Twenty years on: the small firm in the 1990s*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Steyaert, C. and Bouwen, R. (1997) 'Telling stories of entrepreneurship - Towards a narrative-contextual epistemology for entrepreneurial studies'. In Donckels, R. and Mietten, A. (eds) *Entrepreneurship and SME research: On its way to the next millenium*, Adelshot: Ashgate.
- Storey, D.J. (1994) *Understanding the small business sector*, London: Routledge.
- Storey, D.J., Keasey, K., Watson, R. and Wynarczyk, P. (1987) *Performance of small firms : profits, jobs, and failure*, London : Croom Helm.
- Touzard, H., Lancry-Hoelstandt, A. and Harpaz, I. (1992) 'Comportements, appréciations au travail et satisfaction du jeune travailleur', *Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale*, 1, 105-121.
- Van Gelderen, M. and Thurik, R. (1997) 'Action strategies and performance: strategy process as a characteristic of small business founders', *RENT XI Conference*, Mannheim, November.
- Veenhoven, R. (1989) 'National wealth and individual happiness'. In Grunert, K.G. and Ölander, F. (eds) *Understanding economic behavior*, Kluwer Academy Publishers, 9-32.
- Vega, G. (1996) *Letting go : when entrepreneurs turn into managers*, Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy, The Union Institute.
- Vesper, K.H. (1990) *New venture strategies*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall (revised edition).
- Voerman, L. (1997) 'Female and male entrepreneurs in Sweden and the Netherlands: A test of liberal and social feminism', *RENT XI Conference*, Mannheim, November.
- Watson, J. and Everett, J.E. (1996) 'Do small business have high failure rates ? Evidence from Australian retailers', *Journal of Small Business Management*, 34, 4, October, 45-62.
- Weber, M. (1930) *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*, New York: Scribner's, Inc..



- Weber, M. (1968) *Economy and society : an outline of interpretive sociology*, New York: Bedminster.
- Weick, K.E. and Bougon, M.G. (1986) 'Organizations as cognitive maps : charting ways to success and failure'. In Sims, H.P.Jr and Gioia, D.A. (ed.) *The thinking organization : dynamics of organizational social cognition*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 102-135.
- Weiner, B. (1992) *Human motivation: metaphors, theories, and research*, Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications Inc.
- Weisz, R. (1987) 'Efficacité du travail : fausses pistes, vrais enjeux', *Revue Française de Gestion*, 62, March-April-May, 6-15.
- Welsh, J.A. and White, J.F. (1981) 'A small business is not a little big business', *Harvard Business Review*, 58, 4, July-August, 18-32.
- Wheeler, D. and Sillanpää, M. (1997) *The stakeholder corporation*, London: Pitman Publishing.
- Wiklund, J. (1996) 'Theoretical perspectives in research on firm growth', *RENT X Conference*, Brussels, November.
- Wiklund, J. (1998) *Small firm growth and performance*, Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy, JIBS Dissertation Series No. 003, Jönköping International Business School.
- Wiklund, J., Davidsson, P., Delmar, F. and Aronsson, M. (1997) 'Expected consequences of growth and their effects on growth willingness in different samples of small firms'. In Babson College (ed.) *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, Wellesley, MA: Babson College.
- Winter-Ebmer, R. (1994) 'Motivation for migration and economic success', *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 15, 2, June, 269-284.
- Woodward, J. (1958) 'Management and Technology'. In Burns, T. (ed.) *Industrial man*, Norwich.

## **APPENDIX ONE – QUESTIONNAIRE – ENGLISH VERSION**

The questionnaire and accompanying letter presented in Appendix One are the English translations of the initial French questionnaire and letter.



Rennes, June 1998

Madam, Sir,

We send you this questionnaire in the context of a research work undertaken on small business owner-managers. Your answers will provide us with a better understanding and will enable us to make further progress toward the integration of small firms' particularities.

We thank you for filling this questionnaire as sincerely as possible, basing your answers on your personal convictions. This instrument has been designed in order to necessitate a minimal amount of time. For most of the questions, you will just need to cross the appropriate box.

The completed questionnaire should be returned by means of the enclosed S.A.E. before July 1st, 1998.

We guarantee you the anonymity of your responses. However, if you wish to receive a synthesis of the results, you can send us your name and address, under separate mail, by means of the form provided at the end of the questionnaire.

We thank you in advance for your co-operation, and we look forward to receiving your reply.

Sincerely Yours

Bertrand Duchéneaut

Director of the Centre EURO PME

Corinne Morel d'Arleux

Co-ordinator of the study

MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION

Which are the initial reasons why you became a business leader ?

	<u>not at all</u>	<u>a little</u>	<u>quite</u>	<u>totally</u>
1. by familial tradition, to ensure the durability of the firm -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. to create and achieve something on your own -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. to earn your living, like for any other job-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. to provide a legacy to your children-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. to gain social recognition-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. by taste for risk -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. to create your own job-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. to feel useful to society -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. it just occurred by chance, as a matter of circumstances-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. to face new challenges -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. to gain a higher social status-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. to market your idea of product or service-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. to feel respected by your relatives -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. to have more flexibility to organise your time -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. to accomplish yourself -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. by taste for power and authority -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. to keep on learning -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. to achieve a good financial operation-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. to fulfil a dream -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. to provide your family with an income -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. by need for independence, to be your own boss-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. to contribute to local or national economy-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. by taste for leadership -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. by sense of moral duty, civic and social commitment-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. to grasp a business opportunity -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. other (precise) : -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Within these reasons, please indicate the numbers of the three most important :

....., ....., .....

	<u>not at all</u>	<u>a little</u>	<u>quite</u>	<u>totally</u>
Would you say that these three expectations have been satisfied ? -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have the global feeling that you have not met your initial goals, do you think it is :

- ☐ because of elements external to yourself and uncontrollable ?
- ☐ because of elements external to yourself, which you could have controlled ?
- ☐ because of elements directly related to yourself ?



not at all      a little      quite      totally

Do you have the feeling that your objectives have changed over the years ? ----- ☐      ☐      ☐      ☐

Which relative weight would you *personally* give to the following logics, regarding the decision making for your firm ?

- economic logic (maximising the profitability of the firm) ..... %
  - political logic (keeping and consolidating your power inside the firm) ..... %
  - familial logic (ensuring income and patrimony to your family) ..... %
- TOTAL----- 100 %

Would you say that :

- ☐ you are easily satisfied with yourself
- ☐ you are generally satisfied with yourself
- ☐ you are sometimes satisfied, but you are more generally rather critical and demanding with yourself
- ☐ you never feel satisfied, you always need to over-achieve

not at all      a little      quite      totally

Do you feel satisfied with your personal income ? ----- ☐      ☐      ☐      ☐

In terms of the work you do, would you say that the personal income you receive from the firm is :

- ☐ rather over-estimated
- ☐ justified
- ☐ rather under-estimated

not at all      a little      quite      totally

For the same revenue, would you prefer to be employed in a large firm ? ----- ☐      ☐      ☐      ☐

⇒ If ‘not at all’ or ‘a little’, why ? (you can give multiple answers)

- ☐ to preserve your independence
- ☐ by avoidance of hierarchy
- ☐ by taste for leadership
- ☐ by taste for risk
- ☐ other : .....

⇒ If ‘quite’ or ‘totally’, why ? (you can give multiple answers)

- ☐ for security
- ☐ not to assume the whole responsibility of a small firm’s leader
- ☐ other : .....

Would you say that your firm :

- ☐ is performing very well
- ☐ is healthy
- ☐ is in a temporary crisis period
- ☐ is encountering serious difficulties

not at all      a little      quite      totally

Everything being considered, would you say that you are happy ?----- ☐      ☐      ☐      ☐

Everything being considered, to what extent do you feel satisfied or not with the life you have right now ?

Give a mark out of ten : ..... / 10

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

To what extent do you agree with the following statements as far as you are concerned?

	<u>not at all</u>	<u>a little</u>	<u>quite</u>	<u>totally</u>
1. you often take initiatives-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. you are creative-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. you like to take risks -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. you are able to imagine original applications for ordinary objects -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. you believe that your success only depends upon yourself-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. you like to be seen as a role model -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. you are a 'winner, you need to feel that you are always moving ahead	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. you believe in yourself -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. you need social recognition -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. you easily find solutions to problems-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. you always finish what you have started -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. you have a strong willingness for independence -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. you are constantly hyperactive, you cannot stand doing nothing-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. you like to know where you are going -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. you'd rather stand on your own feet than ask for somebody's help ---	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. you like to do things in your own way -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. you are ambitious-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. you grasp all the opportunities that occur -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. you have esteem for yourself-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. you like to face challenges-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. you generally expect to be successful in what you make-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which are, for you, in a few key words, the definitions of a :

▪ director : .....

.....

▪ business leader : .....

.....

▪ entrepreneur : .....

.....

Would you rather describe yourself as a :

- ☐ director
- ☐ business leader
- ☐ entrepreneur

If you had to make a choice between these two types of businesses, which one would you choose ?

- ☐ a firm with a high profit potential, but with a high level of risk
- ☐ a firm with a moderate profit but high chances of success



SOCIO-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

For each of the following elements, please circle the appropriate number, depending on whether the right- or the left- item best qualifies the familial environment you had as a child or as a teenager.

rural	1	2	3	4	urban
modest revenues	1	2	3	4	financial comfort
simple, manual	1	2	3	4	cultural, intellectual knowledge
religious	1	2	3	4	secular
politically engaged	1	2	3	4	politically neutral
child left to him/herself	1	2	3	4	familial cocoon
taste for security and comfort	1	2	3	4	taste for risk and challenge
priority given to work	1	2	3	4	priority given to family life
value of effort	1	2	3	4	facility
ambition	1	2	3	4	humility
rigid morality	1	2	3	4	liberalness of ideas
dialogue	1	2	3	4	lack of communication
respect for hierarchy and age	1	2	3	4	equality and critical spirit
large family	1	2	3	4	small-sized family
sedentary, regional anchorage	1	2	3	4	travels, geographical mobility
traditional family	1	2	3	4	re-constituted family
individual responsibility	1	2	3	4	responsibility taken by the parents

Do you have brothers and sisters ?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

- ⇒ If yes

⇒ how many ? .....

⇒ are you :
  - ☐ the oldest
  - ☐ intermediary
  - ☐ the youngest

What was your parents' profession ?

	<u>father</u>	<u>mother</u>
business leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
executive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
employee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
craftsman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
farmer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
retail trader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
independent worker	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
no profession	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
other : .....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Would you say that your parents' or relatives' profession has plaid a role in your decision to become a business leader :

- ☐ essential
- ☐ strong
- ☐ weak
- ☐ none

Do you know other relatives who are or have been business leaders or independent workers ?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

⇒ If yes                    ⇒ How many ? .....                    ⇒ Relationship to you : .....

⇒ In this case, would you say that your relatives' profession has plaid a role in your decision to become a business leader :

- ☐ essential
- ☐ strong
- ☐ weak
- ☐ none

In which manner have your parents or relatives contributed to your becoming a business leader ? (you can give multiple answers)

- ☐ no particular contribution
- ☐ financial support
- ☐ moral support
- ☐ providing you with business advice, taking profit of their experience
- ☐ providing you with contacts, taking profit of their networks
- ☐ offering role models, providing you with the willingness to do so
- ☐ transmitting the familial business
- ☐ participating actively to the launching of the firm, as associates
- ☐ other : .....

To what extent do you agree with the following statements ?

	<u>not at all</u>	<u>a little</u>	<u>quite</u>	<u>totally</u>
Work is important -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family is important -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual accomplishment is important-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friends are important-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money and material goods are important -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leisure is important -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion is important -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Politics are important-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**YOUR VISION OF SUCCESS**

**In a few words, could you explain what ‘success’ means to you ?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**In a few words, could you evoke your best success memory ?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**In a few words, could you evoke your worst failure memory ?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**According to you, at the professional level, what are the constitutive elements of success ?**  
(indicate the three most important elements to you from 1 (the most important) to 3)

- ☐ to generate employment
- ☐ to have a good profitability
- ☐ welfare and feeling of commitment of the employees
- ☐ to manage an important firm in terms of sales volume
- ☐ to be the leader on one’s market
- ☐ to ensure the durability of the firm
- ☐ to develop the firm
- ☐ to innovate, to anticipate
- ☐ to progress in terms of one’s own career
- ☐ to ensure oneself a comfortable income
- ☐ other : .....

**According to you, at the familial level, what are the constitutive elements of success ?**  
(indicate the three most important elements to you from 1 (the most important) to 3)

- ☐ to share leisure time with one’s family
- ☐ to see one’s children grow
- ☐ to have a stable and united household
- ☐ to transmit values to one’s children
- ☐ to ensure one’s family income
- ☐ to constitute a legacy for one’s children
- ☐ other : .....

**According to you, at the personal level, what are the constitutive elements of success ?**  
(indicate the three most important elements to you from 1 (the most important) to 3)

- ☐ to follow one’s values and principles
- ☐ to accomplish one’s dreams
- ☐ to surpass oneself and be in a constant challenge
- ☐ to be well known, to have social recognition
- ☐ to have a peaceful life
- ☐ to have comfortable earnings
- ☐ to constantly learn through new experiences and contacts
- ☐ to have available time for one’s passions, sports or leisure
- ☐ to actively participate to society (associations...)
- ☐ other : .....

Which relative importance do you personally give to the three following elements in your global success ?

▪ personal success	..... %
▪ familial success	..... %
▪ professional success	..... %
TOTAL	<div><div></div>100 %</div>

Do you consider that you are successful ?

	<u>not at all</u>	<u>a little</u>	<u>quite</u>	<u>totally</u>
▪ professionally -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ personally-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ familiially -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What is, according to you, the weight of your personal contribution to your firm’s success ?

- ☐ essential
- ☐ strong
- ☐ weak

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

How many hours do you work a week ? ..... hours

How much holidays do you take a year ? ..... weeks

Do you face conflicts between your familial, professional and personal priorities ?

- ☐ often
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ never

	<u>not at all</u>	<u>a little</u>	<u>quite</u>	<u>totally</u>
Would you say that you have a flourishing family life ? -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your personal life revolve around your firm ? -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you practice sports on a regular basis ? -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have any extra-professional activity (club, association, political involvement...) ? -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you think that one can combine familial and professional success as a business leader ? -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



GROWTH AND PERSPECTIVES

	<u>not at all</u>	<u>a little</u>	<u>quite</u>	<u>totally</u>
Do you think that your firm is large enough ? -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you had the possibility to, would you like to develop your firm ? ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- ⇒ If ‘totally’ or ‘quite’, why ? (you can give multiple answers)
- ☐ to gain market shares
  - ☐ to follow the competitors
  - ☐ because growth is an end in itself
  - ☐ other : .....

- ⇒ If ‘not at all’ or ‘a little’, why ? (you can give multiple answers)
- ☐ by fear not to be able to manage growth
  - ☐ to preserve your independence
  - ☐ to maintain control inside the firm
  - ☐ to preserve a small structure climate
  - ☐ other : .....

In which manner do you intend to achieve growth ? (you can give multiple answers)

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> external growth      | ⇒ | <input type="radio"/> creation of other firm(s)    |
|  |   | <input type="radio"/> acquisition of other firm(s) |
| <input type="radio"/> internal growth      | ⇒ | <input type="radio"/> in sales                     |
|  |   | <input type="radio"/> in number of employees       |
|  |   | <input type="radio"/> in profitability             |
| <input type="radio"/> you do not intend to |   |  |
| <input type="radio"/> other :              |   | .....  |

Have you decided of an upper limit to the number of employees in your firm ?

- ☐ yes ⇒ how many ? : ..... employees
- ☐ no

What is your strategy when facing changes in the environment (economic context, competitors, technology etc.) ?

- ☐ anticipation
- ☐ rapid adaptation to ongoing changes
- ☐ response to changes once these are established

Are you optimistic when thinking about the future :

	<u>not at all</u>	<u>a little</u>	<u>quite</u>	<u>totally</u>
▪ for yourself ?-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ for your business ? -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## IDENTITY OF THE RESPONDENT

**Age** ..... years old

**Gender** ☐ male ☐ female

**Nationality** ☐ French ☐ other : .....

**Familial situation** ☐ married  
☐ divorced  
☐ remarried  
☐ widow(er)  
☐ single

**Number of children** ..... child(ren)

**Personal annual gross income (salary and dividends received from the firm) :**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> less than 100 thousands of francs | <input type="radio"/> 400 - 500 thousands of francs     |
| <input type="radio"/> 100 - 200 thousands of francs     | <input type="radio"/> 500 - 600 thousands of francs     |
| <input type="radio"/> 200 - 300 thousands of francs     | <input type="radio"/> 600 - 700 thousands of francs     |
| <input type="radio"/> 300 - 400 thousands of francs     | <input type="radio"/> 700 - 800 thousands of francs     |
|   | <input type="radio"/> more than 800 thousands of francs |

**In terms of controlled capitalshare (total of the capitalshare possessed together with friends and family) are you a :**

- ☐ minority shareholder ? (< 50%) ⇒ capitalshare controlled ? ..... %  
☐ majority shareholder ? (> 50%) ⇒ capitalshare controlled ? ..... %

⇒ **For majority shareholders - In the event of a development of the firm, would you be ready to lose your majority in the capital ?**

- ☐ totally ready  
☐ rather ready  
☐ rather not  
☐ not at all

## IDENTITY OF THE FIRM

**Age of the firm** ..... years

**Sector of operations** ☐ Industry  
☐ Construction and Public Works  
☐ Transports and Communication  
☐ Retail Trade  
☐ Services  
☐ Other : .....

**Is your firm a :**

- ☐ subsidiary of a group (capitalshare owned at more than 50 % by another firm)  
☐ head of a group (owning more than 50 % in the capitalshare of another firm)  
☐ franchisee  
☐ none of the above



<b>Number of employees</b>	present (1998)	..... employees
	five years ago (1993)	..... employees
⇒ Has the evolution been : <input type="radio"/> stable <input type="radio"/> erratic		

<b>Turnover</b>	present (1997)	..... millions of francs
	five years ago (1992)	..... millions of de francs
you may prefer to indicate the evolution of turnover during the five past years : ..... %		
⇒ Has the evolution been : <input type="radio"/> stable <input type="radio"/> erratic		

<b>Part of the export turnover</b>	present (1997)	..... %
	five ycars ago (1992)	..... %
⇒ Has the evolution been : <input type="radio"/> stable <input type="radio"/> erratic		

<b>Net result after taxes</b>	present (1997)	..... thousands of francs
	five years ago (1992)	..... thousands of francs
you may prefer to indicate the evolution of turnover during the five past years : ..... %		
⇒ Has the evolution been : <input type="radio"/> stable <input type="radio"/> erratic		

<b>Net profitability</b>	present (1997)	..... %
	five years ago (1992)	..... %
⇒ Has the evolution been : <input type="radio"/> stable <input type="radio"/> erratic		

**Within the past five years, have you bought (an)other firm(s) ?**

- ☐ yes    ⇒ How many ? .....
- ☐ no

**Within the past five years, have you created (an)other firm(s) ?**

- ☐ yes    ⇒ How many ? .....
- ☐ no

## EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

**What is your educational level (last diploma obtained) ?**

- [illegible]

### What is your backwards perception on your school years ?

- ☐ very good
- ☐ rather good
- ☐ rather bad
- ☐ very bad

**For how long have you been the leader of your present business ? ..... years**

**Have you :**

- ☐ created your firm ?
- ☐ bought the firm ?
- ☐ inherited the firm through familial transmission ?

⇒ If you have created the firm, were you :

☐ sole founder

☐ a team of founders      ⇒ How many ? .....

**What was your previous position before becoming this firm's leader ?**

- ☐ professionally active      ⇒ Indicate :      ☐ already employed in this firm  
   ☐ employed in another firm  
   ☐ leader of another firm  
   ☐ independent worker
- ☐ unemployed      ⇒ Indicate above the preceding position held  
☐ student  
☐ other

**Your professional experience was mainly achieved :**

- as an employee ⇒ In how many firms ? .....
- as a business leader or independent worker

**Have you already run one or more businesses before this firm ?**

- ☐ yes  
☐ no

⇒ If yes

- ⇒ how many firms ? .....
- ⇒ what type of firms ?
  - ☐ < 10 employees
  - ☐ 10-49 employees
  - ☐ 50-499 employees
  - ☐ > 500 employees
- ⇒ For how long ? ..... years
- ⇒ Did you hold the capitalshare in : ☐ majority ☐ minority

**Do you presently run one or more other businesses ?**

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

⇒ If yes ⇒ how many firms ? .....

⇒ what type of firms ?

☐ < 10 employees                      ☐ 10-49 employees

☐ 50-499 employees                      ☐ > 500 employees

⇒ For how long ? ..... years

⇒ Do you hold the capitalshare in : ☐ majority                      ☐ minority



## FREE COMMENTS

[illegible]

**THANKS A LOT FOR ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

**... Please don't forget to send it back with the pre-stamped envelope enclosed ! Thanks.**

**SYNTHESIS OF THE RESULTS**

If you wish to receive the synthesis of the results, please return this sheet together with your name and address, to :

Centre of Studies and Research EURO PME  
« SME leaders profile »  
Groupe ESC RENNES  
2 rue Robert d'Arbrissel  
35065 Rennes Cedex

We will keep you informed. You will receive the synthesis as soon as the input and analysis of the questionnaires is finished. However, this phase of the work might be rather long and we apologise in advance for any delay that may be encountered.

Thanking you for your interest.

**NAME :** .....

**ADDRESS** where you would like to receive the synthesis :  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



## **APPENDIX TWO – GLOBAL RESULTS**

The following tables present the frequencies of replies to the questionnaire for the whole sample (236 respondents). They are described and analysed in section 6.1. The initial French questions have been translated, according to the English questionnaire presented in Appendix One.

1. Initial reasons : by familial tradition, to ensure the durability of the firm

	Nb	%
No answer	8	3,4
not at all	131	55,5
a little	15	6,4
quite	20	8,5
totally	62	26,3
TOTAL	236	100

2. Initial reasons : to create and achieve something on your own

	Nb	%
No answer	10	4,2
not at all	10	4,2
a little	25	10,6
quite	46	19,5
totally	145	61,4
TOTAL	236	100

3. Initial reasons : to earn your living, like for any other job

	Nb	%
No answer	18	7,6
not at all	59	25
a little	43	18,2
quite	51	21,6
totally	65	27,5
TOTAL	236	100

4. Initial reasons : to provide a legacy to your children

	Nb	%
No answer	12	5,1
not at all	78	33,1
a little	52	22
quite	48	20,3
totally	46	19,5
TOTAL	236	100

5. Initial reasons : to gain social recognition

	Nb	%
No answer	16	6,8
not at all	106	44,9
a little	59	25
quite	34	14,4
totally	21	8,9
TOTAL	236	100

6. Initial reasons : by taste for risk

	Nb	%
No answer	13	5,5
not at all	52	22
a little	56	23,7
quite	78	33,1
totally	37	15,7
TOTAL	236	100

7. Initial reasons : to create your own job

	Nb	%
No answer	16	6,8
not at all	176	74,6
a little	16	6,8
quite	7	3
totally	21	8,9
TOTAL	236	100



**8. Initial reasons : to feel useful to society**

	Nb	%
No answer	18	7,6
not at all	89	37,7
a little	56	23,7
quite	42	17,8
totally	31	13,1
TOTAL	236	100

**9. Initial reasons : it just occurred by chance, as a matter of circumstances**

	Nb	%
No answer	16	6,8
not at all	128	54,2
a little	33	14
quite	24	10,2
totally	35	14,8
TOTAL	236	100

**10. Initial reasons : to face new challenges**

	Nb	%
No answer	11	4,7
not at all	50	21,2
a little	56	23,7
quite	65	27,5
totally	54	22,9
TOTAL	236	100

**11. Initial reasons : to gain a higher social status**

	Nb	%
No answer	15	6,4
not at all	121	51,3
a little	59	25
quite	31	13,1
totally	10	4,2
TOTAL	236	100

**12. Initial reasons : to market your idea of product or service**

	Nb	%
No answer	16	6,8
not at all	116	49,2
a little	34	14,4
quite	44	18,6
totally	26	11
TOTAL	236	100

**13. Initial reasons : to feel respected by your relatives**

	Nb	%
No answer	16	6,8
not at all	157	66,5
a little	44	18,6
quite	16	6,8
totally	3	1,3
TOTAL	236	100

**14. Initial reasons : to have more flexibility to organise your time**

	Nb	%
No answer	17	7,2
not at all	140	59,3
a little	30	12,7
quite	35	14,8
totally	14	5,9
TOTAL	236	100

15. Initial reasons : to accomplish yourself

	Nb	%
No answer	12	5,1
not at all	19	8,1
a little	38	16,1
quite	68	28,8
totally	99	41,9
TOTAL	236	100

16. Initial reasons : by taste for power and authority

	Nb	%
No answer	15	6,4
not at all	109	46,2
a little	52	22
quite	44	18,6
totally	16	6,8
TOTAL	236	100

17. Initial reasons : to keep on learning

	Nb	%
No answer	15	6,4
not at all	36	15,3
a little	54	22,9
quite	65	27,5
totally	66	28
TOTAL	236	100

18. Initial reasons : to achieve a good financial operation

	Nb	%
No answer	15	6,4
not at all	46	19,5
a little	62	26,3
quite	77	32,6
totally	36	15,3
TOTAL	236	100

19. Initial reasons : to fulfil a dream

	Nb	%
No answer	16	6,8
not at all	71	30,1
a little	42	17,8
quite	62	26,3
totally	45	19,1
TOTAL	236	100

20. Initial reasons : to provide your family with an income

	Nb	%
No answer	14	5,9
not at all	30	12,7
a little	58	24,6
quite	78	33,1
totally	56	23,7
TOTAL	236	100

21. Initial reasons : by need for independence, to be your own boss

	Nb	%
No answer	11	4,7
not at all	20	8,5
a little	32	13,6
quite	53	22,5
totally	120	50,8
TOTAL	236	100



22. Initial reasons : to contribute to local or national economy

	Nb	%
No answer	16	6,8
not at all	92	39
a little	66	28
quite	37	15,7
totally	25	10,6
TOTAL	236	100

23. Initial reasons : by taste for leadership

	Nb	%
No answer	15	6,4
not at all	33	14
a little	43	18,2
quite	90	38,1
totally	55	23,3
TOTAL	236	100

24. Initial reasons : by sense of moral duty, civic and social commitment

	Nb	%
No answer	17	7,2
not at all	110	46,6
a little	55	23,3
quite	32	13,6
totally	22	9,3
TOTAL	236	100

25. Initial reasons : to grasp a business opportunity

	Nb	%
No answer	17	7,2
not at all	112	47,5
a little	34	14,4
quite	30	12,7
totally	43	18,2
TOTAL	236	100

27. Within these reasons, please indicate the numbers of the three most important ones :

	Nb	%
No answer	8	0
to create and achieve something on your own	119	50,4
by need for independence	80	33,9
to accomplish yourself	71	30,1
by familial tradition	63	26,7
to face new challenges	40	16,9
to earn your living	33	14
to provide a legacy to your children	33	14
by taste for leadership	26	11
to provide your family with an income	25	10,6
to keep on learning	24	10,2
to achieve a good financial operation	21	8,9
to grasp a business opportunity	20	8,5
to fulfil a dream	17	7,2
to create your own job	15	6,4
by chance	15	6,4
to market your idea of product or service	15	6,4
by taste for risk	11	4,7
to feel useful to society	11	4,7
to have more flexibility to organise your time	9	3,8
by taste for power and authority	7	3
to gain social recognition	5	2,1
to contribute to local or national economy	5	2,1
by sense of moral duty	5	2,1
other	5	2,1
to gain a higher social status	4	1,7
to feel respected by your relatives	1	0,4
TOTAL / Surveyed	236	288,1

Surveyed: 236 / Respondents: 228 / Answers: 680

28. Would you say that these three expectations have been satisfied ?

	Nb	%
No answer	4	1,7
not at all	3	1,3
a little	17	7,2
quite	100	42,4
totally	112	47,5
TOTAL	236	100

29. If you have the global feeling that you have not met your initial goals, do you think it is :

	Nb	%
No answer	131	55,5
because of elements external to yourself and uncontrollable	52	22
because of elements external to yourself, which you could have controlled	35	14,8
because of elements directly related to yourself	18	7,6
TOTAL	236	100

30. Do you have the feeling that your objectives have changed over the years ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
not at all	17	7,2
a little	42	17,8
quite	94	39,8
totally	80	33,9
TOTAL	236	100

31. Which relative weight would you *personally* give to the economic logic, regarding the decision making for your firm ?

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
51,95	0	100
Observations	No answer	
231	5	
from ( $\geq$ )0 to ( $<$ )20	6	2,60%
from ( $\geq$ )20 to ( $<$ )40	45	19,50%
from ( $\geq$ )40 to ( $<$ )60	93	40,30%
from ( $\geq$ )60 to ( $<$ )80	50	21,60%
from ( $\geq$ )80 to ( $<$ )100	35	15,20%
from ( $\geq$ )100 to ( $<$ )101	2	0,90%

32. Which relative weight would you *personally* give to the political logic, regarding the decision making for your firm ?

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
19,53	0	70
Observations	No answer	
219	17	
from ( $\geq$ )0 to ( $<$ )20	96	43,80%
from ( $\geq$ )20 to ( $<$ )40	104	47,50%
from ( $\geq$ )40 to ( $<$ )60	17	7,80%
from ( $\geq$ )60 to ( $<$ )80	2	0,90%
from ( $\geq$ )80 to ( $<$ )100	0	0%
from ( $\geq$ )100 to ( $<$ )100	0	0%

33. Which relative weight would you *personally* give to the familial logic, regarding the decision making for your firm ?

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
30,28	0	100
Observations	No answer	
228	8	
from ( $\geq$ )0 to ( $<$ )20	51	22%
from ( $\geq$ )20 to ( $<$ )40	103	45%
from ( $\geq$ )40 to ( $<$ )60	61	27%
from ( $\geq$ )60 to ( $<$ )80	10	4%
from ( $\geq$ )80 to ( $<$ )100	1	0%
from ( $\geq$ )100 to ( $<$ )101	2	1%



34. Would you say that :

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
you are easily satisfied with yourself	2	0,8
you are generally satisfied with yourself	54	22,9
you are sometimes satisfied, but you are more generally rather critical and demanding with yourself	147	62,3
you never feel satisfied, you always need to over-achieve	30	12,7
TOTAL	236	100

35. Do you feel satisfied with your personal income ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	32	13,6
a little	50	21,2
quite	109	46,2
totally	44	18,6
TOTAL	236	100

36. In terms of the work you do, would you say that the personal income you receive from the firm is :

	Nb	%
No answer	0	0
rather over-estimated	3	1,3
justified	127	53,8
rather under-estimated	106	44,9
TOTAL	236	100

37. For the same revenue, would you prefer to be employed in a large firm ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	175	74,2
a little	25	10,6
quite	13	5,5
totally	21	8,9
TOTAL	236	100

38. If 'not at all' or 'a little', why ?

	Nb	%
No answer	38	0
to preserve your independence	161	68,2
by avoidance of hierarchy	38	16,1
by taste for leadership	77	32,6
by taste for risk	54	22,9
other	11	4,7
TOTAL / Surveyed	236	144,5

Surveyed: 236 / Respondents: 198 / Answers: 341

39. If 'quite' or 'totally', why ?

	Nb	%
No answer	201	0
for security	7	3
not to assume the whole responsibility of a small firm's leader	23	9,7
other	7	3
TOTAL / Surveyed	236	15,7

Surveyed: 236 / Respondents: 35 / Answers: 37

40. Would you say that your firm :

	Nb	%
No answer	10	4,2
is performing very well	5	2,1
is healthy	160	67,8
is in a temporary crisis period	50	21,2
is encountering serious difficulties	11	4,7
TOTAL	236	100

41. Everything being considered, would you say that you are happy ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	4	1,7
a little	31	13,1
quite	139	58,9
totally	61	25,8
TOTAL	236	100

42. Everything being considered, to what extent do you feel satisfied or not with the life you have right now ?

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
7,08	0	10
Observations	No answer	
236	0	
from (>=)0 to (<)6	39	16,50%
from (>=)6 to (<)7	19	8,10%
from (>=)7 to (<)8	61	25,80%
from (>=)8 to (<)9	84	35,60%
from (>=)9 to (<)11	33	14%

43. you often take initiatives

	Nb	%
No answer	0	0
not at all	0	0
a little	3	1,3
quite	68	28,8
totally	165	69,9
TOTAL	236	100

45. you are creative

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	7	3
a little	53	22,5
quite	102	43,2
totally	72	30,5
TOTAL	236	100

46. you like to take risks

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	8	3,4
a little	73	30,9
quite	102	43,2
totally	52	22
TOTAL	236	100

47. you are able to imagine original applications for ordinary objects

	Nb	%
No answer	10	4,2
not at all	83	35,2
a little	66	28
quite	49	20,8
totally	28	11,9
TOTAL	236	100

48. you believe that your success only depends upon yourself

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	65	27,5
a little	73	30,9
quite	76	32,2
totally	21	8,9
TOTAL	236	100



49. you like to be seen as a role model

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
not at all	106	44,9
a little	91	38,6
quite	29	12,3
totally	7	3
TOTAL	236	100

50. you are a 'winner', you need to feel that you are always moving ahead

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	10	4,2
a little	41	17,4
quite	102	43,2
totally	82	34,7
TOTAL	236	100

51. you believe in yourself

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	0	0
a little	42	17,8
quite	129	54,7
totally	63	26,7
TOTAL	236	100

52. you need social recognition

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	81	34,3
a little	97	41,1
quite	46	19,5
totally	10	4,2
TOTAL	236	100

53. you easily find solutions to problems

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	2	0,8
a little	30	12,7
quite	156	66,1
totally	46	19,5
TOTAL	236	100

54. you always finish what you have started

	Nb	%
No answer	0	0
not at all	0	0
a little	17	7,2
quite	108	45,8
totally	111	47
TOTAL	236	100

55. you have a strong willingness for independence

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	1	0,4
a little	21	8,9
quite	91	38,6
totally	122	51,7
TOTAL	236	100

56. you are constantly hyperactive, you cannot stand doing nothing

	Nb	%
No answer	0	0
not at all	12	5,1
a little	30	12,7
quite	93	39,4
totally	101	42,8
TOTAL	236	100

57. you like to know where you are going

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	1	0,4
a little	18	7,6
quite	99	41,9
totally	117	49,6
TOTAL	236	100

58. you'd rather stand on your own feet than ask for somebody's help

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	74	31,4
a little	56	23,7
quite	58	24,6
totally	46	19,5
TOTAL	236	100

59. you like to do things in your own way

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	19	8,1
a little	52	22
quite	110	46,6
totally	53	22,5
TOTAL	236	100

60. you are ambitious

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	5	2,1
a little	40	16,9
quite	121	51,3
totally	69	29,2
TOTAL	236	100

61. you grasp all the opportunities that occur

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	20	8,5
a little	58	24,6
quite	106	44,9
totally	51	21,6
TOTAL	236	100

62. you have esteem for yourself

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	20	8,5
a little	94	39,8
quite	102	43,2
totally	18	7,6
TOTAL	236	100

63. you like to face challenges

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	5	2,1
a little	29	12,3
quite	130	55,1
totally	71	30,1
TOTAL	236	100

64. you generally expect to be successful in what you make

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
not at all	3	1,3
a little	28	11,9
quite	117	49,6
totally	85	36
TOTAL	236	100



68. Would you rather describe yourself as a :

	Nb	%
No answer	26	11
director	37	15,7
business leader	132	55,9
entrepreneur	41	17,4
TOTAL	236	100

69. If you had to make a choice between these two types of businesses, which one would you choose ?

	Nb	%
No answer	8	3,4
a firm with a high profit potential, but with a high level of risk	35	14,8
a firm with a moderate profit but high chances of success	193	81,8
TOTAL	236	100

70. familial environment : rural ?

	Nb	%
No answer	4	1,7
totally	55	23,3
quite	48	20,3
no	129	54,7
TOTAL	236	100

71. familial environment : urban ?

	Nb	%
No answer	4	1,7
totally	70	29,7
quite	59	25
no	103	43,6
TOTAL	236	100

72. familial environment : modest revenues ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	57	24,2
quite	70	29,7
no	106	44,9
TOTAL	236	100

73. familial environment : financial comfort ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	36	15,3
quite	70	29,7
no	127	53,8
TOTAL	236	100

74. familial environment : simple, manual ?

	Nb	%
No answer	5	2,1
totally	42	17,8
quite	85	36
no	104	44,1
TOTAL	236	100

75. familial environment : cultural, intellectual knowledge ?

	Nb	%
No answer	5	2,1
totally	25	10,6
quite	79	33,5
no	127	53,8
TOTAL	236	100

76. familial environment : religious ?

	Nb	%
No answer	5	2,1
totally	57	24,2
quite	87	36,9
no	87	36,9
TOTAL	236	100

77. familial environment : secular ?

	Nb	%
No answer	5	2,1
totally	38	16,1
quite	50	21,2
no	143	60,6
TOTAL	236	100

78. familial environment : politically engaged ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
totally	33	14
quite	53	22,5
no	148	62,7
TOTAL	236	100

79. familial environment : politically neutral ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
totally	67	28,4
quite	80	33,9
no	87	36,9
TOTAL	236	100

80. familial environment : child left to him/herself ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	23	9,7
quite	45	19,1
no	165	69,9
TOTAL	236	100

81. familial environment : familial cocoon ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	55	23,3
quite	111	47
no	67	28,4
TOTAL	236	100

82. familial environment : taste for security and comfort ?

	Nb	%
No answer	6	2,5
totally	21	8,9
quite	86	36,4
no	123	52,1
TOTAL	236	100

83. familial environment : taste for risk and challenge ?

	Nb	%
No answer	6	2,5
totally	31	13,1
quite	92	39
no	107	45,3
TOTAL	236	100



84. familial environment : priority given to work ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	85	36
quite	74	31,4
no	74	31,4
TOTAL	236	100

85. familial environment : priority given to family life ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	19	8,1
quite	55	23,3
no	159	67,4
TOTAL	236	100

86. familial environment : value of effort ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
totally	130	55,1
quite	63	26,7
no	41	17,4
TOTAL	236	100

87. familial environment : facility ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
totally	12	5,1
quite	29	12,3
no	193	81,8
TOTAL	236	100

88. familial environment : ambition ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	44	18,6
quite	97	41,1
no	92	39
TOTAL	236	100

89. familial environment : humility ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	30	12,7
quite	61	25,8
no	142	60,2
TOTAL	236	100

90. familial environment : rigid morality ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	45	19,1
quite	80	33,9
no	108	45,8
TOTAL	236	100

91. familial environment : liberalness of ideas ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	22	9,3
quite	86	36,4
no	125	53
TOTAL	236	100

92. familial environment : dialogue ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
totally	45	19,1
quite	87	36,9
no	102	43,2
TOTAL	236	100

93. familial environment : lack of communication ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
totally	32	13,6
quite	71	30,1
no	131	55,5
TOTAL	236	100

94. familial environment : respect for hierarchy and age ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	77	32,6
quite	85	36
no	71	30,1
TOTAL	236	100

95. familial environment : equality and critical spirit ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	17	7,2
quite	54	22,9
no	162	68,6
TOTAL	236	100

96. familial environment : large family ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	50	21,2
quite	57	24,2
no	126	53,4
TOTAL	236	100

97. familial environment : small-sized family ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	49	20,8
quite	77	32,6
no	107	45,3
TOTAL	236	100

98. familial environment : sedentary, regional anchorage ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	82	34,7
quite	74	31,4
no	77	32,6
TOTAL	236	100

99. familial environment : travels, geographical mobility ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
totally	39	16,5
quite	38	16,1
no	156	66,1
TOTAL	236	100



100. familial environment : traditional family ?

	Nb	%
No answer	4	1,7
totally	156	66,1
quite	32	13,6
no	44	18,6
TOTAL	236	100

101. familial environment : re-constituted family ?

	Nb	%
No answer	4	1,7
totally	24	10,2
quite	20	8,5
no	188	79,7
TOTAL	236	100

102. familial environment : individual responsibility ?

	Nb	%
No answer	4	1,7
totally	77	32,6
quite	103	43,6
no	52	22
TOTAL	236	100

103. familial environment : responsibility taken by the parents ?

	Nb	%
No answer	4	1,7
totally	12	5,1
quite	40	16,9
no	180	76,3
TOTAL	236	100

104. Do you have brothers and sisters ?

	Nb	%
No answer	0	0
yes	206	87,3
no	30	12,7
TOTAL	236	100

105. If yes, how many ?

Mean	2,54
------	------

106. If yes, are you :

	Nb	%
No answer	31	13,1
the oldest	90	38,1
intermediary	65	27,5
the youngest	50	21,2
TOTAL	236	100

107. What was your father's profession ?

	Nb	%
No answer	5	2,1
business leader	84	35,6
employee	40	16,9
executive	30	12,7
farmer	19	8,1
retail trader	18	7,6
craftsman	14	5,9
independent worker	13	5,5
other	10	4,2
teacher	3	1,3
no profession	0	0
TOTAL	236	100

108. What was your mother's profession ?

	Nb	%
No answer	15	6,4
no profession	106	44,9
employee	38	16,1
retail trader	19	8,1
business leader	12	5,1
other	11	4,7
teacher	10	4,2
independent worker	8	3,4
farmer	7	3
executive	5	2,1
craftsman	5	2,1
TOTAL	236	100

109. Would you say that your parents' or relatives' profession has played a role in your decision to become a business leader :

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
essential	57	24,2
strong	64	27,1
weak	47	19,9
none	66	28
TOTAL	236	100

110. Do you know other relatives who are or have been business leaders or independent workers ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
yes	103	43,6
no	132	55,9
TOTAL	236	100

112. If yes, relationship to you .

	Nb	%
No answer	141	59,7
uncles and aunts	44	18,6
grand-parents	14	5,9
cousins	1	0,4
brothers and sisters	19	8,1
friends	6	2,5
others	11	4,7
TOTAL	236	100

113. In this case, would you say that your relatives' profession has played a role in your decision to become a business leader :

	Nb	%
No answer	136	57,6
essential	15	6,4
strong	37	15,7
weak	34	14,4
none	14	5,9
TOTAL	236	100

114. In which manner have your parents or relatives contributed to your becoming a business leader ?

	Nb	%
No answer	5	0
no particular contribution	84	35,6
moral support	69	29,2
transmitting the familial business	67	28,4
financial support	50	21,2
providing you with business advice, taking profit of their experience	49	20,8
offering role models, providing you with the willingness to do so	42	17,8
providing you with contacts, taking profit of their networks	26	11
participating actively to the launching of the firm, as associates	23	9,7
other	10	4,2
TOTAL / Surveyed	236	178

Surveyed: 236 / Respondents: 231 / Answers: 420



115. Work is important, do you agree ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	0	0
a little	3	1,3
quite	51	21,6
totally	180	76,3
TOTAL	236	100

116. Family is important, do you agree ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	1	0,4
a little	9	3,8
quite	51	21,6
totally	174	73,7
TOTAL	236	100

117. Individual accomplishment is important, do you agree ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	0	0
a little	4	1,7
quite	53	22,5
totally	178	75,4
TOTAL	236	100

118. Friends are important, do you agree ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	11	4,7
a little	37	15,7
quite	83	35,2
totally	103	43,6
TOTAL	236	100

119. Money and material goods are important, do you agree ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	3	1,3
a little	71	30,1
quite	129	54,7
totally	32	13,6
TOTAL	236	100

120. Leisure is important, do you agree ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	12	5,1
a little	71	30,1
quite	112	47,5
totally	39	16,5
TOTAL	236	100

121. Religion is important, do you agree ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	92	39
a little	74	31,4
quite	45	19,1
totally	24	10,2
TOTAL	236	100

122. Politics are important, do you agree ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	82	34,7
a little	90	38,1
quite	45	19,1
totally	17	7,2
TOTAL	236	100

126. According to you, at the professional level, what are the constitutive elements of success ?

	Nb (Rank 1)	%	Nb (Rank 2)	%	Nb (Rank 3)	%	Nb (Global)	%	Rank mean
No answer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,2	
to ensure the durability of the firm	77	32,6	49	20,7	29	12,2	155	21,9	1,7
to have a good profitability	46	19,4	47	19,9	39	16,5	132	18,7	1,9
to develop the firm	44	18,6	48	20,3	34	14,4	126	17,8	1,9
welfare and feeling of commitment of the employees	20	8,4	27	11,4	41	17,3	88	12,4	2,2
to generate employment	16	6,7	17	7,2	27	11,4	60	8,5	2,2
to innovate, to anticipate	14	5,9	17	7,2	24	10,1	55	7,8	2,2
to ensure oneself a comfortable income	5	2,1	6	2,5	19	8	30	4,2	2,5
to be the leader on one's market	6	2,5	12	5	7	2,9	25	3,5	2
to progress in terms of one's own career	4	1,6	8	3,3	7	2,9	19	2,6	2,2
to manage an important firm in terms of sales volume	4	1,6	5	2,1	4	1,6	13	1,8	2
other	0	0	0	0	2	0,8	2	0,2	3
TOTAL	236	100	236	100	236	100	705	100	

127. According to you, at the familial level, what are the constitutive elements of success ?

	Nb (Rank 1)	%	Nb (Rank 2)	%	Nb (Rank 3)	%	Nb (Global)	%	Rank mean
No answer	0	0	0	0	4	1,6	0		
to have a stable and united household	101	42,7	36	15,2	28	11,8	165	23,5	1,6
to transmit values to one's children	46	19,4	79	33,4	27	11,4	152	21,6	1,9
to share leisure time with one's family	35	14,8	30	12,7	60	25,4	125	17,8	2,2
to ensure one's family income	27	11,4	53	22,4	41	17,3	121	17,2	2,1
to see one's children grow	16	6,7	27	11,4	31	13,1	74	10,5	2,2
to constitute a legacy for one's children	8	3,3	9	3,8	42	17,7	59	8,4	2,6
other	3	1,2	0	0	3	1,2	6	0,8	2
TOTAL	236	100	236	100	236	100	702	100	

128. According to you, at the personal level, what are the constitutive elements of success ?

	Nb (Rank 1)	%	Nb (Rank 2)	%	Nb (Rank 3)	%	Nb (Global)	%	Rank mean
No answer	0	0	0	0	3	1,2	0		
to follow one's values and principles	118	50	30	12,7	25	10,5	173	24,5	1,5
to constantly learn through new experiences and contacts	22	9,3	44	18,6	43	18,2	109	15,4	2,2
to surpass oneself and be in a constant challenge	31	13,1	41	17,3	19	8	91	12,9	1,9
to have comfortable earnings	11	4,6	29	12,2	47	19,9	87	12,3	2,4
to accomplish one's dreams	33	13,9	28	11,8	17	7,2	78	11	1,8
to have available time for one's passions, sports or leisure	7	2,9	17	7,2	48	20,3	72	10,2	2,6
to actively participate to society (associations...)	5	2,1	22	9,3	16	6,7	43	6,1	2,3
to have a peaceful life	4	1,6	15	6,3	10	4,2	29	4,1	2,2
to be well known, to have social recognition	3	1,2	9	3,8	5	2,1	17	2,4	2,1
other	2	0,8	0	0	3	1,2	5	0,7	2,2
TOTAL	236	100	236	100	236	100	704	100	



129. Which relative importance do you personally give to *personal* success in your global success ?

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
25,74	0	50
Observations	No answer	
236	0	
from (>=)0 to (<)10	9	3,8%
from (>=)10 to (<)20	39	16,5%
from (>=)20 to (<)30	65	27,5%
from (>=)30 to (<)40	92	39%
from (>=)40 to (<)50	23	9,7%
from (>=)50 to (<)51	8	3,4%

130. Which relative importance do you personally give to *familial* success in your global success ?

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
37,8	0	80
Observations	No answer	
236	0	
from (>=)0 to (<)10	1	0,4%
from (>=)10 to (<)20	7	3%
from (>=)20 to (<)30	37	15,7%
from (>=)30 to (<)40	78	33,1%
from (>=)40 to (<)50	50	21,2%
from (>=)50 to (<)81	63	26,7%

131. Which relative importance do you personally give to *professional* success in your global success ?

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
36,46	0	80
Observations	No answer	
236	0	
from (>=)0 to (<)10	1	0,4%
from (>=)10 to (<)20	7	3%
from (>=)20 to (<)30	36	15,3%
from (>=)30 to (<)40	92	39%
from (>=)40 to (<)50	52	22%
from (>=)50 to (<)81	48	20,3%

132. Do you consider that you are *personally* successful ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	1	0,4
a little	52	22
quite	146	61,9
totally	35	14,8
TOTAL	236	100

133. Do you consider that you are *familially* successful ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	6	2,5
a little	50	21,2
quite	110	46,6
totally	69	29,2
TOTAL	236	100

134. Do you consider that you are *professionally* successful ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	2	0,8
a little	28	11,9
quite	157	66,5
totally	48	20,3
TOTAL	236	100

129R4. Calculated variable : Index for Global Success

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
207,0636	0	300
Observations	No answer	
236	0	
from ( $\geq$ )0 to ( $<$ )167	36	15,3%
from ( $\geq$ )167 to ( $<$ )190	42	17,8%
from ( $\geq$ )190 to ( $<$ )200	10	4,2%
from ( $\geq$ )200 to ( $<$ )201	62	26,3%
from ( $\geq$ )201 to ( $<$ )260	42	17,8%
from ( $\geq$ )260 to ( $<$ )301	44	18,6%

135. What is, according to you, the weight of your personal contribution to your firm's success ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
essential	120	50,8
strong	111	47
weak	2	0,8
TOTAL	236	100

136. How many hours do you work a week ?

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
57,62	10	100
Observations	No answer	
231	5	
from ( $\geq$ )10 to ( $<$ )50	34	14,70%
from ( $\geq$ )50 to ( $<$ )52	53	22,90%
from ( $\geq$ )52 to ( $<$ )60	24	10,40%
from ( $\geq$ )60 to ( $<$ )63	62	26,80%
from ( $\geq$ )63 to ( $<$ )80	39	16,90%
from ( $\geq$ )80 to ( $<$ )101	19	8,20%

137. How much holidays do you take a year ? (weeks)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
3,37	0	10
Observations	No answer	
233	3	
from ( $\geq$ )0 to ( $<$ )2	33	14,20%
from ( $\geq$ )2 to ( $<$ )3	50	21,50%
from ( $\geq$ )3 to ( $<$ )4	55	23,60%
from ( $\geq$ )4 to ( $<$ )5	35	15%
from ( $\geq$ )5 to ( $<$ )6	32	13,70%
from ( $\geq$ )6 to ( $<$ )11	28	12%

138. Do you face conflicts between your familial, professional and personal priorities ?

	Nb	%
No answer	5	2,1
often	62	26,3
sometimes	137	58,1
never	32	13,6
TOTAL	236	100

139. Would you say that you have a flourishing family life ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	10	4,2
a little	56	23,7
quite	126	53,4
totally	42	17,8
TOTAL	236	100



140. Does your personal life revolve around your firm ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	5	2,1
a little	33	14
quite	134	56,8
totally	63	26,7
TOTAL	236	100

141. Do you practice sports on a regular basis ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	102	43,2
a little	63	26,7
quite	33	14
totally	37	15,7
TOTAL	236	100

142. Do you have any extra-professional activity (club, association, political involvement...) ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	100	42,4
a little	40	16,9
quite	46	19,5
totally	49	20,8
TOTAL	236	100

143. Do you think that one can combine familial and professional success as a business leader ?

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
not at all	2	0,8
a little	53	22,5
quite	83	35,2
totally	97	41,1
TOTAL	236	100

144. Do you think that your firm is large enough ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
not at all	48	20,3
a little	50	21,2
quite	99	41,9
totally	36	15,3
TOTAL	236	100

145. If you had the possibility to, would you like to develop your firm ?

	Nb	%
No answer	5	2,1
not at all	18	7,6
a little	25	10,6
quite	51	21,6
totally	137	58,1
TOTAL	236	100

146. If 'totally' or 'quite', why ?

	Nb	%
No answer	46	0
to gain market shares	74	31,4
to follow the competitors	54	22,9
because growth is an end in itself	103	43,6
other	27	11,4
TOTAL / Surveyed	236	109,3

Surveyed: 236 / Respondents: 190 / Answers: 258

147. If 'not at all' or 'a little', why ?

	Nb	%
No answer	183	0
by fear not to be able to manage growth	12	5,1
to preserve your independence	17	7,2
to maintain control inside the firm	11	4,7
to preserve a small structure climate	32	13,6
other	5	2,1
TOTAL / Surveyed	236	32,6

Surveyed: 236 / Respondents: 53 / Answers: 77

148. In which manner do you intend to achieve growth ?

	Nb	%
No answer	9	0
creation of other firm(s)	68	28,8
acquisition of other firm(s)	87	36,9
in sales	143	60,6
in number of employees	67	28,4
in profitability	128	54,2
you do not intend to	16	6,8
other	2	0,8
TOTAL / Surveyed	236	216,5

Surveyed: 236 / Respondents: 227 / Answers: 511

149. Have you decided of an upper limit to the number of employees in your firm ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
yes	87	36,9
no	147	62,3
TOTAL	236	100

150. If yes, how many employees ?

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
39,97	10	150
Observations	No answer	
87	149	
from ( $\geq$ )10 to ( $<$ )20	13	14,90%
from ( $\geq$ )20 to ( $<$ )25	15	17,20%
from ( $\geq$ )25 to ( $<$ )35	16	18,40%
from ( $\geq$ )35 to ( $<$ )49	9	10,30%
from ( $\geq$ )49 to ( $<$ )50	15	17,20%
from ( $\geq$ )50 to ( $<$ )151	19	21,80%

151. What is your strategy when facing changes in the environment ?

	Nb	%
No answer	24	10,2
anticipation	63	26,7
rapid adaptation to ongoing changes	139	58,9
response to changes once these are established	10	4,2
TOTAL	236	100

152. Are you optimistic when thinking about the future for yourself ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
not at all	7	3
a little	40	16,9
quite	125	53
totally	61	25,8
TOTAL	236	100



153. Are you optimistic when thinking about the future for your firm ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
not at all	17	7,2
a little	47	19,9
quite	128	54,2
totally	42	17,8
TOTAL	236	100

154. Age of the respondent

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
46,85	26	70
Observations	No answer	
236	0	
from ( $\geq$ )26 to ( $<$ )38	36	15,30%
from ( $\geq$ )38 to ( $<$ )43	39	16,50%
from ( $\geq$ )43 to ( $<$ )47	36	15,30%
from ( $\geq$ )47 to ( $<$ )51	40	16,90%
from ( $\geq$ )51 to ( $<$ )55	39	16,50%
from ( $\geq$ )55 to ( $<$ )71	46	19,50%

155. Gender

	Nb	%
No answer	0	0
female	48	20,3
male	188	79,7
TOTAL	236	100

156. Nationality

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
French	234	99,2
other	1	0,4
TOTAL	236	100

157. Familial situation

	Nb	%
No answer	0	0
married	184	78
divorced	22	9,3
remarried	14	5,9
widow(er)	2	0,8
single	14	5,9
TOTAL	236	100

158. Number of children

Mean	2,23
------	------

159. Personal annual gross income (salary and dividends received from the firm)

	Nb	%
No answer	1	0,4
Less than 100 KF	4	1,7
100 -200	31	13,1
200-300	44	18,6
300-400	36	15,3
400-500	35	14,8
500-600	24	10,2
600-700	15	6,4
700-800	10	4,2
More than 800 KF	36	15,3
TOTAL	236	100

160. In terms of controlled capitalshare (total of the capitalshare possessed together with friends and family) are you a :

	Nb	%
No answer	0	0
minority shareholder	13	5,5
majority shareholder	223	94,5
TOTAL	236	100

161. Capitalshare controlled ? (%)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
83,2	21	100
Observations	No answer	
230	6	
from ( $\geq$ )21 to ( $<$ )54	38	16,50%
from ( $\geq$ )54 to ( $<$ )78	38	16,50%
from ( $\geq$ )78 to ( $<$ )95	37	16,10%
from ( $\geq$ )95 to ( $<$ )100	37	16,10%
from ( $\geq$ )100 to ( $<$ )101	80	34,80%

162. For majority shareholders - In the event of a development of the firm, would you be ready to lose your majority in the capital ?

	Nb	%
No answer	31	13,1
totally	26	11
rather ready	39	16,5
rather not	80	33,9
not at all	60	25,4
TOTAL	236	100

163. Age of the firm

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
28,87	2	168
Observations	No answer	
232	4	
from ( $\geq$ )2 to ( $<$ )9	37	15,90%
from ( $\geq$ )9 to ( $<$ )12	35	15,10%
from ( $\geq$ )12 to ( $<$ )18	39	16,80%
from ( $\geq$ )18 to ( $<$ )30	38	16,40%
from ( $\geq$ )30 to ( $<$ )43	38	16,40%
from ( $\geq$ )43 to ( $<$ )169	45	19,40%

164. Sector of operations

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
Industry	54	22,9
Construction and public works	27	11,4
Transports and communication	13	5,5
Retail trade	69	29,2
Services	59	25
other	12	5,1
TOTAL	236	100

165. Is your firm a :

	Nb	%
No answer	6	0
subsidiary of a group	8	3,4
head of a group	17	7,2
franchisee	22	9,3
none of the above	183	77,5
TOTAL / Surveyed	236	97,5

Surveyed: 236 / Respondents: 230 / Answers: 230

166. Present number of employees (1998)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
38,97	5	300
Observations	No answer	
236	0	
from ( $\geq$ )5 to ( $<$ )15	42	17,80%
from ( $\geq$ )15 to ( $<$ )20	44	18,60%
from ( $\geq$ )20 to ( $<$ )28	39	16,50%
from ( $\geq$ )28 to ( $<$ )37	38	16,10%
from ( $\geq$ )37 to ( $<$ )58	39	16,50%
from ( $\geq$ )58 to ( $<$ )301	34	14,40%



167. Number of employees five years ago (1993)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
27,62	0	160
Observations	No answer	
221	15	
from ( $\geq$ )0 to ( $<$ )10	39	17,60%
from ( $\geq$ )10 to ( $<$ )15	36	16,30%
from ( $\geq$ )15 to ( $<$ )21	39	17,60%
from ( $\geq$ )21 to ( $<$ )30	35	15,80%
from ( $\geq$ )30 to ( $<$ )45	33	14,90%
from ( $\geq$ )45 to ( $<$ )161	39	17,60%

168. Has the evolution been :

	Nb	%
No answer	17	7,2
stable	138	58,5
erratic	81	34,3
TOTAL	236	100

169. Present turnover (1997, millions of francs)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
39,089	0,5	850
Observations	No answer	
227	9	
from ( $\geq$ )0.5 to ( $<$ )7.5	41	18,10%
from ( $\geq$ )7.5 to ( $<$ )11	35	15,40%
from ( $\geq$ )11 to ( $<$ )18	35	15,40%
from ( $\geq$ )18 to ( $<$ )28	36	15,90%
from ( $\geq$ )28 to ( $<$ )55	37	16,30%
from ( $\geq$ )55 to ( $<$ )851	43	18,90%

170. Turnover five years ago (1992)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
28,911	0	680
Observations	No answer	
215	21	
from ( $\geq$ )0 to ( $<$ )4.5	39	18,10%
from ( $\geq$ )4.5 to ( $<$ )8	30	14%
from ( $\geq$ )8 to ( $<$ )12	35	16,30%
from ( $\geq$ )12 to ( $<$ )20	36	16,70%
from ( $\geq$ )20 to ( $<$ )42	36	16,70%
from ( $\geq$ )42 to ( $<$ )681	39	18,10%

172. Has the evolution been :

	Nb	%
No answer	23	9,7
stable	131	55,5
erratic	82	34,7
TOTAL	236	100

173. Present export turnover (1997, %)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
8,31	0	100
Observations	No answer	
182	54	
from ( $\geq$ )0 to ( $<$ )1	106	58,20%
from ( $\geq$ )1 to ( $<$ )10	31	17%
from ( $\geq$ )10 to ( $<$ )33	30	16,50%
from ( $\geq$ )33 to ( $<$ )101	15	8,20%

174. Export turnover five years ago (1992)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
6,01	0	100
Observations	No answer	
176	60	
from ( $\geq$ )0 to ( $<$ )1	112	63,60%
from ( $\geq$ )1 to ( $<$ )6	31	17,60%
from ( $\geq$ )6 to ( $<$ )70	29	16,50%
from ( $\geq$ )70 to ( $<$ )101	4	2,30%

175. Has the evolution been :

	Nb	%
No answer	149	63,1
stable	59	25
erratic	28	11,9
TOTAL	236	100

176. Present net result after taxes (1997, thousands of francs)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
424,28	-1750	6500
Observations	No answer	
185	51	
from ( $\geq$ )-1750 to ( $<$ )3	30	16,20%
from ( $\geq$ )3 to ( $<$ )133	31	16,80%
from ( $\geq$ )133 to ( $<$ )280	33	17,80%
from ( $\geq$ )280 to ( $<$ )420	30	16,20%
from ( $\geq$ )420 to ( $<$ )800	29	15,70%
from ( $\geq$ )800 to ( $<$ )6501	32	17,30%

177. Net result after taxes five years ago (1992)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
319,21	-400	3500
Observations	No answer	
158	78	
from ( $\geq$ )-400 to ( $<$ )2	26	16,50%
from ( $\geq$ )2 to ( $<$ )86	27	17,10%
from ( $\geq$ )86 to ( $<$ )160	27	17,10%
from ( $\geq$ )160 to ( $<$ )350	29	18,40%
from ( $\geq$ )350 to ( $<$ )700	25	15,80%
from ( $\geq$ )700 to ( $<$ )3501	24	15,20%

179. Has the evolution been :

	Nb	%
No answer	52	22
stable	82	34,7
erratic	102	43,2
TOTAL	236	100

180. Present net profitability (1997, %)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
6,9	-9	100
Observations	No answer	
114	122	
from ( $\geq$ )9 to ( $<$ )1	18	15,80%
from ( $\geq$ )1 to ( $<$ )2	17	14,90%
from ( $\geq$ )2 to ( $<$ )3	15	13,20%
from ( $\geq$ )3 to ( $<$ )5	20	17,50%
from ( $\geq$ )5 to ( $<$ )10	20	17,50%
from ( $\geq$ )10 to ( $<$ )101	24	21,10%

181. Net profitability five years ago (1992)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
7,09	0	75
Observations	No answer	
97	139	
from ( $\geq$ )0 to ( $<$ )1	16	16,50%
from ( $\geq$ )1 to ( $<$ )2	16	16,50%
from ( $\geq$ )2 to ( $<$ )4	17	17,50%
from ( $\geq$ )4 to ( $<$ )7	15	15,50%
from ( $\geq$ )7 to ( $<$ )12	17	17,50%
from ( $\geq$ )12 to ( $<$ )76	16	16,50%

182. Has the evolution been :

	Nb	%
No answer	102	43,2
stable	57	24,2
erratic	77	32,6
TOTAL	236	100



183. Within the past five years, have you bought (an)other firm(s) ?

	Nb	%
No answer	9	3,8
yes	71	30,1
no	156	66,1
TOTAL	236	100

184. If yes, how many ?

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
1,58	1	5
Observations	No answer	
	72	164
from ( $\geq$ )1 to ( $<$ )2	42	58,30%
from ( $\geq$ )2 to ( $<$ )3	21	29,20%
from ( $\geq$ )3 to ( $<$ )6	9	12,50%

185. Within the past five years, have you created (an)other firm(s) ?

	Nb	%
No answer	10	4,2
yes	84	35,6
no	142	60,2
TOTAL	236	100

186. If yes, how many ?

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
1,57	1	5
Observations	No answer	
	82	154
from ( $\geq$ )1 to ( $<$ )2	51	62,20%
from ( $\geq$ )2 to ( $<$ )3	20	24,40%
from ( $\geq$ )3 to ( $<$ )6	11	13,40%

187. What is your educational level (last diploma obtained) ?

	Nb	%
No answer	3	1,3
below the Baccalauréat	59	25
Baccalauréat	50	21,2
Baccalauréat +2	34	14,4
Bac +3 and more : Business School	24	10,2
Bac +3 and more : Engineering School	22	9,3
Bac +3 and more : other	44	18,6
TOTAL	236	100

188. What is your backwards perception on your school years ?

	Nb	%
No answer	2	0,8
very good	66	28
rather good	113	47,9
rather bad	52	22
very bad	3	1,3
TOTAL	236	100

189. For how long have you been the leader of your present business ? (years)

Mean	Minimum	Maximum
12,68	1	50
Observations	No answer	
	232	4
from ( $\geq$ )1 to ( $<$ )5	34	14,70%
from ( $\geq$ )5 to ( $<$ )8	39	16,80%
from ( $\geq$ )8 to ( $<$ )11	49	21,10%
from ( $\geq$ )11 to ( $<$ )15	33	14,20%
from ( $\geq$ )15 to ( $<$ )21	36	15,50%
from ( $\geq$ )21 to ( $<$ )51	41	17,70%

190. You have :

	Nb	%
No answer	4	0
created the firm	114	48,3
bought the firm	57	24,2
inherited the familial firm	67	28,4
TOTAL / Surveyed	236	100,8

Surveyed: 236 / Respondents: 232 / Answers: 238

191. If you have created the firm, were you :

	Nb	%
No answer	126	53,4
sole founder	80	33,9
a team of founders	30	12,7
TOTAL	236	100

193. What was your previous position before becoming this firm's leader ?

	Nb	%
No answer	5	2,1
employed in another firm	101	42,8
already employed in this firm	60	25,4
leader of another firm	21	8,9
independent worker	16	6,8
student	16	6,8
unemployed	12	5,0
other	5	2,1
TOTAL	236	100

194. Your professional experience was mainly achieved :

	Nb	%
No answer	9	3,8
as an employee	145	61,4
as a business leader or independent worker	82	34,7
TOTAL	236	100

195. If your professional experience was mainly achieved as an employee, in how many firms ?

Mean

2,73

196. Have you already run one or more businesses before this firm ?

	Nb	%
No answer	4	1,7
yes	52	22
no	180	76,3
TOTAL	236	100

197. If yes, how many firms ?

Mean

2,09

198. If yes, what type of firm(s) ?

	Nb	%
No answer	181	76,7
< 10 employees	24	10,2
10-49 employees	20	8,5
50-499 employees	9	3,8
> 500 employees	2	0,8
TOTAL	236	100

204. If yes, were you :

	Nb	%
No answer	187	79,2
majority shareholder	30	12,7
minority shareholder	19	8,1
TOTAL	236	100

201. If yes, for how long ?

Mean

8,76



207. Do you presently run one or more other businesses ?

	Nb	%
No answer	10	4,2
yes	117	49,6
no	109	46,2
TOTAL	236	100

208. If yes, how many ?

Mean	2,59
------	------

209. If yes, what type of firm(s) ?

	Nb	%
No answer	121	51,3
< 10 employees	42	17,8
10-49 employees	65	27,5
50-499 employees	8	3,4
> 500 employees	0	0
TOTAL	236	100

212. If yes, for how long ?

Mean	8,15
------	------

215. If yes, are you :

	Nb	%
No answer	127	53,8
majority shareholder	92	39
minority shareholder	17	7,2
TOTAL	236	100